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Marxism Today

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

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GEORGE WOOLLEY — CHANGES IN THE PRINTING INDUSTRY

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DISCUSSION:

ALFRED CORUM — MARXISM AND CRITICISM

T. L. DRINKWATER — MONOPOLY CAPITAL

J. D. BERNAL, PAUL CARTER — NO ROOM FOR HOMO SAPIENS?

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Marxism Today

Vol. II No. I

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Editorial Comments

IT is confidently assumed in many quarters that the problems created for the British people, by entry into the Common Market, will be much less than hitherto envisaged. A study of the Commons debate (November 16th and 17th) suggests the opposite. To the old problems debated in 1962-63 there are added new problems relating to the parlous state of the British economy.

One of the old questions was the extent to which basic decisions affecting the economic and political life of Britain, would be taken by the institutions of the Common Market, instead of by the Government and Parliament in Britain. It has been argued by Market supporters that this is now unlikely because the French are obstructing the development of the community in the direction of a supra-national political union and the other states are not very vigorously pressing for it at the present moment.

The views of Mr. Reginald Maudling as expounded in the above debate are therefore of very considerable interest.

> "On the other hand, I think that those who support the concept of a 'Europe des états' [the conception of de Gaulle] underestimate the extent to which an economic union demands common political decisions. . . . More and more problems of a political character will arise as a result of economic union. The free movement of goods and the free movement of capital through a single economic unit brings up such questions as a common currency, a common reserve system and common policies on the pressure of demand. I do not believe in the long term there can be a completely effective single economic union, without in effect having common policies on these major economic matters.
>
> "Therefore we must recognise, and we must be realistic on this, that in joining the European Economic Community, we are committing ourselves to a central decision, not necessarily by a supra-national parliament but a central decision by some machinery and in some form on many basic economic questions of considerable political significance."

The new question that is coming up in relation to the Common Market is the question of the sterling area. From what Mr. Maudling told the Commons, this is going to involve some massive bargaining and some massive interference in the British economy by the foreign banks.

> "It is clear that there would be an advantage in some funding of sterling balances. . . . Perhaps some beginning might be made in this context with a funding of our indebtedness to the International Monetary Fund.
>
> "I doubt it would be in the interest of the world trading community as a whole, if we were endeavouring to run an adequate surplus in the next few years in order to repay the indebtedness out of our own trading balances. This is an opportunity to reorganise the international position of sterling to the benefit of this country and the other monetary authorities of the world as a whole."

So in order to prepare Britain to enter the Market the whole sterling area system is to be put through the mangle. If this were to happen then we might be in for some devaluation of sterling (increasing the cost of living) backed up by deflationary measures, creating further unemployment, in order to hold the wages movement in check.

Unemployment in Market

In the same debate Mr. Edward Heath argued that the Common Market countries had obligations to each other when in balance of payment difficulties and specifically mentioned Italy.

It so happens that Joan Robinson, the well-known economist, has been commenting on what did happen to Italy when it got into balance of payment difficulties, while in the Market.

> "Suppose that our deficit grew, instead of declining, after joining the Six. Each of them has its own mixture of control with *laissez faire* in many ways more successful than our own, but in relations between them [the Market states] the Market rules are strictly imposed. *When full employment cannot be achieved with balanced trade, it is full employment that has to give way. Italy was recently subjected to this treatment and there is no reason to suppose that we should be spared.*" (Italics ours.) (*Economics: An Awkward Corner* by Joan Robinson, Allen and Unwin, 8s. 6d.)

So when you hear that the gates of Paradise will open to Britain when it joins the Common Market be just a little sceptical.

Galbraithism

Professor Galbraith in his Reith Lectures is giving us another version of his famous thesis on the beneficent evolution of American monopoly capitalism. It appears that the monopolies and new monopolies in the USA are serving the people better than competition between small and medium enterprises could and that further progress depends

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on closer co-operation between the monopolies and the state. We would say that Mr. Galbraith is a Wilsonite, if he hadn't been in the game of white-washing modern capitalism before Wilson got round to it. It is Wilson who is most clearly the Galbraithite.

However there are some passages in Joan Robinson's slim volume which are, in their own inimitable way, a comment upon this.

> "We have drifted unconsciously into a highly peculiar economic system. The net earnings of a company belong to its shareholders. They receive them either in the form of dividends, or in the form of the rise in the value of shares corresponding to the earning power of additional investments financed by retained profits. They are free to spend these capital gains for consumption. In so far as they do not spend them, the system so to speak credits them with saving. The wealth generated by technical progress, capital accumulation, work and business acumen thus drop into the laps of rentiers while they sit at home and occupy themselves with other tasks.
>
> "The old excuse for the existence of a wealthy class—that they are necessary to provide savings has worn extremely thin. On the contrary it is their consumption that is a draft upon the nation's resources."

So watch Mr. Galbraith's attempt to give state monopoly capitalism a face lift. See if he says anything later about the distribution of wealth and income in the new capitalism which he is depicting.

No Room for Homo sapiens?

To those who have been following the *Marxism Today* discussion on "No Room for Homo sapiens?", may we commend an article by Y. Guzevaty in the September issue of the Moscow *International Affairs*.[1]

In the fifteen years from 1950 to 1965, he writes, the rate of average annual population increase doubled in comparison with the first half of the century, and the earth's population increased by 800 million, roughly as much as in the preceding fifty years. And of this vast increase "almost nine-tenths was in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America".

In the Afro-Asian and Latin American countries, the author insists, the birth rate is double or even treble that of the developed industrial states.

Under the old colonial regimes hunger and disease counter-balanced the high birth-rate. But with the winning of independence, despite the continued effects of neo-colonialism, with improving measures of health and sanitation, a steady decrease in the death rate began. The population of Asia for instance rose by 370 million in the first half of the 20th century, and in the next 14 years by 500 million.

The author is confident that the economic and cultural development of the liberated countries will "gradually strengthen the material and psychological requisites for lowering the birth-rate". But this is not a rapid process, and, in the meantime a number of complex problems inevitably arise.

There tends to be a migration from rural areas to the towns and an increasing concentration of population in the already settled areas. And almost always acute problems of food supply arise, not as the result of some universal abstract Malthusian law, but as "the results of economic backwardness, rising from completely concrete, historically transient socio-economic conditions . . .".

He cites for example the case of the United Arab Republic, where over the ten years from 1952 to 1962 the real income of the population rose by around 35 per cent, but *per capita* food consumption increased only from 2,315 to 2,590 calories per day.

In a speech on the National Charter (proclaimed in May 1962) President Nasser proclaimed that:

> "The population increase constitutes the most dangerous obstacle that faces the Egyptian people in their drive towards raising the standards of production in their country in an effective and efficient way."

Attempts at family planning, said the President:

> "with the aim of facing the problem of increasing population deserve the most sincere efforts, supported by modern scientific methods".

An increasing number of governments of the young national states, continues Y. Guzevaty, are coming to similar conclusions and hoping to develop a birth-control policy, as one of the means of eliminating their economic backwardness, legacy of colonialism.

It is quite wrong to think, he considers, that birth-control can be the *main* measure for overcoming difficulties, for the main means *must* be the economic and social transformation of the countries concerned.

But, he concludes:

> "a population policy is . . . becoming an increasingly notable feature in the social life of the young national states. In principle this testifies to a more mature approach to problems of economic development. The overwhelming majority of newly-liberated states are planning their economic development, but this cannot be achieved unless population factors are taken into account and efforts are made to influence them so as to ensure a better combination of population growth and economic progress . . . only in the course of a cultural revolution, relying on economic reforms and not supplanting them, can a population programme be effective."

[1] Y. Guzevaty "Population in Developing Countries", *International Affairs*, No. 9, Moscow 1966.

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Well-Established Establishment

The Marxist contention that the British State remains unto this day a *class* state, representing the interests of the capitalist class, was well illustrated in a recent study on "Public Schools and the Army" by C. B. Otley, a Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Sheffield.[2]

Part of the study laid out material that (to Marxists at least) is relatively well known. The officer training colleges in Britain had long been supplied by the public schools:

> "Upwards of 75 per cent of the recruits to Sandhurst between 1890 and 1960 and to Woolwich between 1855 and 1933 were public schoolboys. At certain dates during these periods over 90 per cent of the cadet intake came from the public schools. Between 1926 and 1959 over three-quarters of the members of the British army élite had been educated at the public schools."

A point perhaps not so well appreciated is the extent to which the public school monopoly of supplying potential officers was itself virtually subordinated to a monopoly group *within* the public schools. Ten such schools—Charterhouse, Cheltenham, Clifton, Eton, Haileybury, Harrow, Marlborough, Rugby, Wellington and Winchester—writes Mr. Otley, have held such a dominating position. They contributed 36 per cent of the Sandhurst entry between 1890 and 1960, 38 per cent of the army élite between 1870 and 1959 and 41 per cent of the Woolwich entry between 1855 and 1939.

In 1939, he continues, "nearly two out of every three officers of the rank of lieutenant-general and above were alumni of these ten schools".

It is true that in the years following the Second World War the grammar schools began to contribute to the Sandhurst recruits and in general to the ranks of officers. The grammar school contribution to Sandhurst recruits rose from 5 per cent in 1939 to 22 per cent in 1950. But this percentage remained unchanged between 1950 and 1960, and, according to Mr. Otley, who bases himself on a market research report of early last year, "public school boys still form an absolute majority of all new officers, not merely those coming from Sandhurst".

Most illuminating is Mr. Otley's table of the contribution of Public Schools to the British Army élite 1870-1959. The élite is defined as lieutenant-generals, generals and field marshals.

Whilst in 1870 the public schools contributed only 29 per cent of this élite, the figure rose to 37 per cent in 1897, 59 per cent in 1913, 77 per cent in 1926, 82 per cent in 1939, and *83 per cent in 1959*.

So far as army ranks and non-public school boys are concerned, the answer is the higher the fewer.

What is the percentage today? And what, if anything, is the Labour Government doing about it? This is something that the left needs to find out, and to bring the maximum pressure to bear in the direction of democracy.

Gentlemen Police Officers

If the public schools are still contributing the majority of army officers, how fare the British police?

Lord Trenchard's police college at Hendon, it is true, no longer exists. But very many of the key positions in the police remain in the hands of public schools products of the Hendon system.

In the absence of a preferential system for the recruiting of "gentlemen" police officers, the powers that be seem to be rather loth to promote the rank and file policemen to the key positions. "Too Few Leaders in Prospect" was a heading in an interesting article recently published in *The Times* (23.11.66).

Since 1963 the normal road for promotion to the upper ranks was supposed to be the Bramshill Police College, in particular, its six-months senior staff course.

The original intention was to select up to 40 candidates a year, for senior positions, but, according to *The Times* correspondent, only 36 were chosen in 1963, 29 in 1964 and 27 in 1965. Is there a serious shortage of police to fill the highest ranks, *The Times* asks, or is there something wrong with the method of selection?

It is interesting in this connection that selection for the course is by "*extended interview*", i.e. in the words of *The Times*, "basically the same as that for the Civil Service". This alone might be enough to make us somewhat suspicious. Amongst the assessors for the group of candidates, whose section was watched by *The Times* correspondent, "the chief constables of Gloucestershire and Shropshire were joined by Sir Clive Loehnis, a former head of department at the Foreign Office".

Colonel Eric St. Johnston recently appointed to the key post of Chief Inspector of Constabulary is, according to *New Society* (21.11.66) himself "a product of Hendon College, and one of Lord Trenchard's blue-eyed boys".

He is, writes *New Society*:

> "in fact, a believer in graduate police officers, and this is bound to lead him into bitter conflict with the 80,000 strong Police Federation. Nevertheless, the Home Secretary is in agreement with him, and all the signs indicate that new proposals to ease the path of graduates into the police are on the way."

All this needs watching. The pre-war Hendon College aimed at bringing people of the "right" class and right background direct into the top

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[2] "Public schools and the Army" by C. B. Otley, in *New Society*, November 17th, 1966.

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positions of the police. This sort of privileged officers Training Corps was brought to an end by the pressure of democratic opinion, in which an important factor was the indignation of the rank-and-file policeman.

But if there is such reluctance to promote from the rank-and-file, even after careful selection for and training at Bramshill, and if there is revived pressure for "graduate policemen", does this mean that the old Hendon system of "gentlemen to the top" is to be revived in a disguised form?

Rowland Detrosier

Fergus Nicholson wrote in the April issue of *Marxism Today* on the class character of contemporary education and of the difficulties *that still exist today* for the children of working class parents to obtain a higher education.

This fight of the working class for the right to education is a very old struggle in Britain and has been proceeding in one or another form for more than 150 years.

Some of our readers, I expect, will have first learned of Rowland Detrosier, a pioneer of this struggle, in Brian Simon's *Studies in the History of Education, 1780-1870.*[3]

Detrosier was one of the roving spirits behind the establishment of independent Mechanics Institutes in Lancashire, first in Hulme and in Salford, and later in Manchester. No-one has yet written his biography and, therefore, the recent short study by Gwyn A. Williams, Professor of History in the University of York, is particularly welcome.[4]

For Rowland Detrosier virtually lived for education, and one can almost say died for it. He grew up in poverty, was apprenticed at the age of 12 (1812) to the hard trade of fustian cutter, at 18 entered a cotton mill as a "maker up" of twist, knew hunger, unemployment, and the misery of supporting a family in insecurity and want.

Yet amidst all this he was, in the words of Professor Williams, "famished for learning". He scraped together books, pamphlets, rudimentary scientific equipment, "read and studied as if his life depended on it", became a teacher, first at Sunday Schools and then at Mechanics Institutes.

He believed that Britain in the late 1820s was on the verge of people's power, and that the urgent task, therefore, was to fit the people, through education, to exercise that power. When Manchester artisans began to rebel against the "respectability" and middle class domination of the existing Mechanics Institution, they turned to Detrosier who became President of the new, independent, Institute in March 1829.

It was its independence of the upper and middle classes that endeared the Institute to the militant trade unionists of the time. The Institute is "particularly worthy of honourable mention", wrote John Doherty's *United Trades Co-operative Journal* at the time, "because it is the result of a spontaneous effort of the working people and has sprung up unaided and uncountenanced by what the world so much esteems—*patronage*."

Professor Williams follows Detrosier's own sad descent into that very respectability against which he had so bravely made battle and his unhappy dependence on that very patronage which he had so justly condemned. But for his courageous efforts for the rights of the working class to education he will always be remembered.

Anatoly Lunacharsky

Readers should note the publication in English of a selection of essays on art and literature by Anatoly Lunacharsky, scientist, journalist, omnivorous and erudite reader, dazzling orator, friend of Lenin, and the first People's Commissar of Education in the young Soviet Republic.[5]

Here you will find a few of his essays on Russian literature (Pushkin, Dostoievsky, Blok, Gorky, Mayakovsky) and on such diverse subjects as Shakespeare, Swift, Wagner, Heine, Proust and Bernard Shaw.

Lunacharsky was a Marxist critic whose works were frowned on in the worst period of the cult of personality. Though he had strong views on the social role of literature and always sought the relationship between art and society, he was never dogmatic or heavy-handed.

In his *Theses on the Problems of Marxist Criticism* (1928) he warned strongly against insistence that every Soviet work of art should have a direct topical political bearing:

> "Here is the same phenomenon as in science. To demand that science gives itself up entirely to practical tasks is a profound error. It is a well-known fact that the most abstract of scientific problems can, when solved, sometimes turn out to be most fruitful."

He insisted on the need for literature and art addressed to different audiences at different levels of culture and appreciation.

He attacked those who demanded that critics should be uninterested in the political content of works of art but at the same time called for caution

[3] Brian Simon—*Studies in the History of Education, 1780-1870*, Lawrence & Wishart, 1960.

[4] Gwyn A. Williams—*Rowland Detrosier: a Working-Class Infidel, 1800-34*, St. Anthony's Press, York, 5s.

[5] A. Lunacharsky—*On Literature and Art*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, distributed in Britain by Central Books, 12s. 6d.

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in critical appreciation of this kind, and attacked critics who tried to cover up the shallowness of their criticism behind wordy abuse:

> "Criticism must be applicable to criticism itself, for Marxist criticism is at the same time scientific and artistic work. Anger is not the best guide in criticism and often means that the critic is wrong. . . .
>
> "In our constructive effort there must be as little malice as possible . . . By and large, the Marxist critic, without falling into cheerful indulgence, which would be very wrong on his part, must be *a priori* benevolent. His supreme joy must be in finding the positive and revealing it to the reader . . ."

British Workers and the Polish Uprising

Interesting light on the deep British working-class tradition of international solidarity is thrown by a recent article of a Polish Professor—Henryk Katz—in the journal of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the German Democratic Republic.[6] Professor Katz of Lodz University writes on "The English Workers, the Polish Uprising of 1863, and the Foundation of the First International".

The Polish uprising, directed against Tsarism, was the object of considerable solidarity in many parts of the world, and perhaps, above all amongst the British workers, who had many contacts with different circles of Polish exiles.

Professor Katz quotes *The Beehive*, *Reynolds Newspaper* and other contemporary newspapers and journals that reported demonstrations of solidarity with the Polish struggle. The *Morning Star*, for example, described, on April 4th, 1863, a solidarity meeting, mainly working class, in south-east London. On Easter Sunday, April 5th, despite police prohibition, a rally attended by some 20,000 people, was held in Hyde Park to support the Polish uprising.

A high point in the campaign was the meeting at St. James Hall on April 28th, 1863, which was addressed by Professor Beesly, and which took the decision to send a deputation to meet the Prime Minister.

A Polish émigré General (far from the left) described in a letter a typical solidarity meeting held at Macclesfield (Cheshire). "The friendliness and warmth of the audience", he wrote, "was really wonderful, the people there were mostly manual workers, but they were ready to give up their time from 7.00 to 11.00 p.m."

I think the story is well known of how a further solidarity meeting in St. James Hall on July 22nd, at which a French workers' delegation was present, was one of the main links in the chain of events that led to the formation of the First International.

Perhaps less well known is that from this meeting a National League for the Independence of Poland was set up in Britain which had at one time more than 1,000 members and was an active organiser of press and meetings.

Aeschylus and Athens

George Thomson's *Aeschylus and Athens* has been republished by Lawrence and Wishart after having been out of print for almost ten years. The library edition now costs two guineas, but it is also available in paperback at one guinea.

When it was originally published in 1941 this work was recognised as a great and original contribution to Marxist scholarship. It deals with a most important and exciting theme—the transition from tribalism to the division of society into classes and the formation of the State, as this took place in ancient Greece. And it shows how the problems and strains of these events were reflected in the classical Greek drama, in the plays of Aeschylus.

Thus this book makes at one and the same time a profound contribution to our understanding of how society has developed, and to our understanding of the origins of poetry and drama. It has had a growing influence amongst classical scholars, to whom it demonstrated the possibilities of the Marxist approach to their problems; and it is at the same time in the truest sense a popular book. We are always being told how much western culture owes to the ancient Greeks. No better introduction could be found to the understanding of the revolutionary heritage we owe to them.

Hey Hey LBJ

Straight from the United States of America this month comes *Vietnam North*, by Wilfred Burchett, which has just been published by International Publishers, New York, and is made available here by Lawrence and Wishart as a paperback at 18s.

Wilfred Burchett, a very well-known left-wing journalist, was in North Vietnam for several months in the early summer. This is a most brilliant and enthralling account of what he found and learned there. It includes interviews with the leaders of the Hanoi Government, and with a number of captured American airmen. It also includes a large number of photographs which Burchett took on the spot.

Burchett shows how it is that the Vietnamese are able to withstand the full force of the American attack, and are fully prepared to go on resisting "even if it takes five, ten or twenty years". He explains the stand of both the Hanoi Government and the National Liberation Front, and the terms on which, and on which alone, the war can be ended.

[6] Henryk Katz in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, No. 5, 1966.

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Forward or Back?

Prospects for the Movement

Sam Aaronovitch

IN 1964 it was argued that the most important need was to defeat the Tories. This was accomplished. In 1966 it was argued that it was vital to prevent a Tory come-back and ensure a large Labour majority. This, too, was accomplished. We enter 1967 with this large Labour majority being used not only to repeat Tory policies but to magnify them. It is clear that for large numbers of Labour supporters and voters new questions are arising. But they are questions for us all; questions of perspective, and it is the aim of this article to discuss some of them to stimulate further thought.

Right-Wing Strategy

Let me try to summarise the strategic aim of the right-wing leadership.

First, to carry forward the process of converting the Labour Party into a kind of right-wing popular front that would draw away from the Tories a substantial slice of those workers and sections of the middle strata who vote Tory. If they could buttress this with right-wing and bureaucratic leaderships in the main trade unions, they would have the prospects of a much more enduring Labour majority. In this way they have turned the notion of a genuine popular front led by the working class in the direction of socialism on its head. Wilson would no doubt hope in this way to ward off the Liberal attack on his flanks and avoid the risk that must face a Labour Government carrying out Tory policies of being pressed in periods of crisis towards the notion of a national or coalition government. It was noticeable how Wilson stressed this problem in his speech on the centenary of the birth of Ramsay MacDonald.

"In a personal sense," he said "as in a political sense, Ramsay MacDonald died in 1931, the victim of one of the most ruthless laws of politics, the law of coalitions, that when a Leader, wielding power, becomes dependent on men who unaided could not achieve power, and who, whatever their motives, use him to obtain power—he becomes the prisoner of those men who once they have achieved power no longer need him. Lloyd George, Ramsay MacDonald, each in their turn learnt the bitter lesson of the most inexorable laws in democratic politics."

Knowing Wilson's sense of tactics, it is not fanciful to read into this a warning to his own left wing, invoking the "laws of democratic politics", not to help in putting him in such an embarrassing situation.

Renovation of Capitalism

The second aim is for the Labour Government to renovate British capitalism and begin to adapt it to the new world situation which it faces. The Labour Party leadership was in a favourable position to present itself as the Party of modernisation because the preceding Tory Governments were clearly floundering. While the world changed rapidly, Britain's rivals grew in power, the Common Market was constructed, the national liberation movements expanded and the power of socialist states grew swiftly.

The Tory Party bore all the hallmarks of Britain's peculiar development and the fusion of big business, landed and aristocratic interests in an imperialist economy. It expressed the dislike of technology and spoke the language of the defensive cartel. It became more and more clear that modernisation was an urgent need, and the Labour Party leadership increasingly spoke the language of modern technology, productivity and efficiency. The attempts at rationalisation in the docks, shipbuilding, aircraft and other industries; the establishment of the Industrial Reorganisation Corporation; the reform of the taxation system are all signs of this.

This was, I think, the double strategy of the right wing. Nevertheless, the best-laid plans "gang aft agley". The Labour Government found itself attempting to modernise British capitalism in the midst of a severe crisis in its imperial position. In his speech to the 1966 TUC the Prime Minister said that

> "Britain's balance of payments problem was an index of a deeper malaise of 15 years in which they had not finally come to terms with the end of their imperial posture, in which they had willed ends far beyond the means they were prepared to make available by industrial effort."

Imperial Posture

It had already become clear, however (see Christopher Mayhew's resignation as Navy Minister and Dennis Healey's statement that "we intend to

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remain and shall remain fully capable of carrying out all commitments we have at the present time, including those in the Far East, the Middle East and in Africa and other parts of the world") that the Government was not intending to abandon its imperial posture. Instead, it had decided that *if* "Britain" was not prepared to will the means then the British people were going to be compelled to give up the resources needed.

This is important in considering the nature of the crisis we face which is a matter for discussion. It is clearly not at this stage a "normal" crisis of overproduction arising from productive power outstripping consumer demand. It is crisis arising from the Government's response to a basic and cumulative change in Britain's world position. On the one side, the cost of our imperial posture (not only in terms of military spending, but also capital export, role as world banker and reserve currency) has outstripped the resources of British capitalism. And on the other, within Britain, the bargaining power of the British trade union movement under conditions of full employment had greatly increased.

To meet this change either the imperial posture must be abandoned or the people compelled to give up the resources. And since this change in Britain's world position is not temporary, the attempt to break down trade union resistance, to regulate wages by state action is not temporary either.

As the Government deliberately increases unemployment, cuts back demand, production and investment, the language of technology and of productivity sounds thinner and increasingly hypocritical. Instead of modernisation a severe blow is being delivered to Britain's economy which will undermine still further her world competitive power.

As a result both the strategic aims of the right wing are revealed as unstable and are being undermined.

But this is "only" the economic aspect of maintaining imperialism. Some Government supporters genuinely believe that Wilson is going very slowly so that he can keep the Labour Government in power and give it the chance to move in the direction of socialism. But the political results of supporting the US war in Vietnam, the shameful readiness to do a deal if possible with Smith, support for the West German right wing, etc., are to bolster world reactionary forces, aggravate world tension and bring nearer the danger of a world nuclear conflict. Those who hold this view therefore are speculating that Wilson's foreign policy will fail so that his domestic aim can be accomplished. It doesn't make sense.

There is plainly a crisis of Britain's imperial position and it is leading to a crisis of right-wing social democracy. I say "leading to" because the crisis of imperialism is now much more open (see for example how widespread is now the demand for cutting military spending) than the crisis of right-wing policy.

Crisis of Social Democracy

Nevertheless, resistance to the Government's policies grows each day. I shall say more about this in a moment, but it is a tribute to this growing opposition that a further stage in psychological warfare against this resistance is being organised. Perhaps this is Crossman's true role as leader of the House of Commons and an expert in psychological warfare. In his "Lessons of 1945", published in the *New Statesman* of April 1963, Crossman wrote of "Mr. Bevin . . . building his reputation as a great Foreign Secretary by giving a Trade Union gloss to Sir Winston Churchill's Fulton speech". But Mr. Crossman sees no problem in sitting in the Cabinet alongside George Brown who declares to everyone interested that he models himself on Ernie Bevin.

Perhaps the clue can be gleaned from an earlier statement by Crossman in *Encounter* in May 1954:

> "A democratic party can very rarely be persuaded to give up one of its central principles and can never afford to scrap its central myth. Conservatives must defend free enterprise even when they are actually introducing state planning. A Labour Government must defend as true Socialism policies which have very little to do with it. The job of Party leaders is often to persuade their followers that the traditional policy is still being carried out even when this is demonstrably not true."

Perhaps we can apply Crossman's "principle" to the remarkable articles in the *New Statesman* in September and October which argued that the Labour Government to use its own headline, has "blundered into Socialism":

> "Prices and incomes regulation, conceived in ideological confusion, born in panic, defended by ministers with hesitation and shame, may be a foundling; but it has true socialist blood in its veins and, properly nurtured, is likely to grow into a powerful champion of social progress." (September 16th, 1966.)

Here are shadowed all those myths of "war socialism" which did not apply even in wartime Britain of "equality of sacrifice", etc. However, the detailed class analysis of the Government's policy is not the subject of this article.

The policies and cynicism of the right wing produce certain inevitable results: shock and disillusionment; the search for other scapegoats (to some degree the talk about the gnomes of Zurich has had its value for the right wing); retreat from politics and so on. They also produce resistance

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but whether the shock and disillusionment becomes fuel feeding the resistance is in no way automatic.

It is at this point that the importance of leadership and perspective becomes urgent. The questions of policy can no longer be dodged.

Should the Party and the left, as some certainly argue, be indifferent as to whether there is a Tory or Labour Government?

Tory or Labour Government?

Marxists and all interested in serious political movement are *never* indifferent to the type and character of Governments. And even different tendencies within the one movement can be important in practical politics and can offer openings for the advance of the movement.

But essentially our answer to this question is two-fold.

First, there is the point often made by us that the Labour Party whose MPs form the Government has the trade unions as its mass base. This is an objective fact and it also has its effect on the outlook of millions of workers in that they regard the Labour Party as their political voice in Parliament and on the councils. To be indifferent to this or to regard the Labour Party as identical with the Tory Party is a mixture of blindness and ignorance. In present political circumstances, indifference is an argument for the return of a Tory Government.

Secondly, the Labour Government is a right-wing Government and the Labour Party has a right-wing leadership. But its base, as pointed out, are the mass class organisations of the British working class. How will indifference or, say, the restoration of the Tories bring about the mass exposure of right-wing policies? On the contrary, from the point of view of working-class experience, what is happening now is more important than what happened under Selwyn Lloyd and Macmillan. The Labour Party has sought to establish itself as the second capitalist Party. Nothing assists it more to play the capitalist see-saw Parliamentary game than to be the "hammer of the Tories", the accepted class enemy of the organised workers, when in opposition. Wilson became politically attractive as the critic of Tory stop-go policies. Does it not help to strip away illusions when he becomes the architect of even more severe anti-working-class policies?

For the majority of the working class to reject the Tory Party as the Party of big business is an important political advance. For them to reject right-wing leadership is more complex but to carry this through without retreating to a Tory Government would be the next major advance it can make. This is the perspective the movement must set itself.

Currents of Resistance

This is a perspective that can be set not only because of the particular structure of the Labour movement but because the issues facing us today make a broad alignment of popular progressive and working-class forces possible. The crisis of imperialism not only threatens full employment but abolishes it; it creates crises in the social services at a time when masses of people have come to realise the enormous changes which are possible; it weakens the democratic powers of the House of Commons and of Local Authorities; it attacks the rights of trade unions.

In this way currents of resistance are set in motion among wide sections of people going far beyond the organised working class and its organisations. Of outstanding importance is the changing mood of young people, their political interest, their search for alternative policies; their refusal to be hoodwinked by the alleged affluent society. In religious circles, the growth of organised Left groupings, the interest in dialogue with Marxists (trends which exist also among Catholics) show the loosening up process which is taking place under the impact of the forces which produced the crisis and the measures taken by the Government.

Nor is this all. The kind of changes which are the alternatives to Government policy cannot be made without sooner or later involving the very foundations of the social system itself. Democratic reforms become issues for revolutionary change.

None of this is automatic. To what extent mass experience of the Labour Government leads to a real basic development of the movement depends, I suggest, on three interlocking fields of struggle.

The Degree of the Struggle

The first is the degree to which the working class and its allies carry through actions which make it impossible for the Government to operate its policy. Every wage and salary claim that is made and fought for if multiplied can break the so-called zero norm. The freeze after all is voluntary and no one has to be a volunteer (except those "chosen" by specific Government order). Every struggle against redundancy which compels an employer to retreat, if multiplied throughout the country, can help to frustrate Government policy. The proposals of the December 3rd conference of trade union and shop steward organisations if popularised and fought for can push back Government policy.

We all noted Frank Cousins's statement at the Labour Party conference on the anti-Trade Union legislation:

> "Legislation is now to be introduced today to protect employers against our wish to enforce legal

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> contracts. By the action of introducing Part IV we are inhibiting the ability of the trade unions to do their job. . . . We have been in conflict before over basic principles. . . . Now we shall be in conflict with the law. If the law has been unfair, Trade Unionists consistently since time immemorial, have opposed the law."

Some delegates at that Labour Party conference will have recalled the actions of the gas workers and the dockers which led to the Labour Government withdrawing the infamous regulation 1305.

But the point here is that every action by whatever group of people, which demands its rights, which refuses to accept cuts and postponements in essential plans, builds up the practical refusal of the working people to bear the burden of Government policy and deepens the political crisis of the Government so long as it tries to impose that policy.

Such actions presuppose *united* activity, the overcoming of divisions, and the growth also of solidarity between those concerned.

Working-class history is full, however, of examples of acts of resistance, some heroic, which seem to have left little mark on the history of the movement. The truth is, that, unless these actions begin to become part of an over-all challenge on the main lines of policy, they cannot be sustained. The groups involved feel themselves isolated and they are subject to the ebb and flow of events. Anyone involved in a tenant's struggle will have seen this happen again and again.

Common Alternative Programme

This leads me to the second field of struggle—the emergence of a common alternative programme which amounts to a challenge to the main line of Government and big business policy. Such a left consensus is certainly taking shape.

At the Party's 29th Congress we launched an Appeal to the Left which outlined our proposals for such a programme. We set them out further in our folder "Alternative to the Wage Freeze", and have developed them in various pamphlets and publications. One only has to read the articles and speeches of MPs like Stan Orme, Stan Newens, Frank Allaun, Ian Mikardo, Norman Atkinson and others; of Trade Union leaders like Frank Cousins, Clive Jenkins, Jim Mortimer, etc.; publications like *Beyond the Freeze*, journals like *Tribune*, motions in the House of Commons such as that presented on November 30th, as this article was being written; resolutions from Trade Unions and Constituency Labour Parties to the Labour Party conferences; to see that consensus is truly emerging.

Though there are variations, there are eight points which are virtually now common to all these groups.

First: defeat the pay freeze, resist sackings, secure high wages, pensions, etc. and so increase purchasing power. Second: impose a real price freeze. Third: end military spending abroad and cut the total arms bill by half. Fourth: drastically reduce the export of capital. Fifth: import controls. Sixth: repeal anti-Trade Union legislation. Seventh: examine Britain's role as world banker and sell portfolio assets to redeem debts and replenish reserves. Eighth: take over the big monopolies and make real planning possible. These points include the urgent issues of the US war in Vietnam and also of Rhodesia.

There are two other points which the Communist Party does not support. They are the rapid introduction of productivity agreements together with productivity committees, etc. and the proposal for devaluation. These have been put forward in all sincerity and we are bound to discuss them. But leaving them aside, the first eight points I have listed whether taken separately or as a programme can all be shown to be necessary and all challenge the existing policies of the Government.[1]

The development of such a programme is not an "abstract" question. What is at stake is how to raise the political understanding of increasing numbers of people. It is the task of the Party and the left, in every struggle in which it is involved, to raise, discuss and fight for the need of just such an alternative programme.

The struggle itself makes that easier. For instance, in the middle of the fight over sackings in the motor-car industry, the Assistant General Secretary of the Transport Workers' Union raised the question of public ownership of BMC, Ford's and other firms in the motor-car industry.

The alternative policy has to be fought for throughout every section and level of the Labour movement: from the factory and site to the branch, to the District and Executive Committees, through to Trades Councils, Constituency Labour Parties, Co-operative organisations and down again and sideways!

For instance, what will happen at the annual trade union conferences in 1967 for which resolutions are already being submitted, will have a bearing on the influence of the alternative programme and its support.

This programme is not itself a programme for organising socialism. But unless acceptance for it grows, the mass movement itself will be held back. It is the ideological battle which is the vital counterpart of industrial and political battles on wages, Vietnam, Rhodesia and so on.

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[1] On devaluation, see R. P. Dutt's sharp criticism in the *Labour Monthly*, December 1966, to understand why Communists do not accept this policy.

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Left Leadership

This leads me directly to the third main field of struggle. Conference resolutions and majority decisions are notoriously not enough. The recent TUC and Labour Party conferences showed TU executives tearing up the resolutions of their own conferences and national committees. The fight for a left alternative policy inevitably involves the fight for a left alternative leadership in the main organisations of the working class. These are matters which have to be settled by the members of these organisations but they are of general concern to the movement as a whole. We appreciate the role of Frank Cousins for example in the Transport Workers' Union and of other progressive leaders as for example those five technicians' unions who combined to provide the movement with invaluable ammunition against the Government's policy (ACTT, AScW, ASSET, DATA, STCS).

Such a battle for a progressive leadership is obvious enough in the Trade Union movement. It emerged in the elections for the NEC of the Labour Party when there was a distinct swing to the left and growing support for such men as Frank Allaun, John Mendelson and Stan Orme. It is also clear that in different parts of the country, there is growing desire for progressive leadership in the Co-operative societies to reinforce their role as powerful consumer organisations created by the Labour movement in combating private monopolies.

For the left and progressive elements to reach agreement on this is not easy and will require much give and take but its consequences if fought as part of the battle on policy will be profound.

These three fields of struggle interlock. One aspect cannot substantially advance without the other. It is the extent to which they *are* advanced with mass backing that can answer the two key questions:

Can the minority view (minority as expressed in conference decisions) become the majority view?

Can the right wing grip on the machinery of the mass organisations be broken?

From Minority to Majority

On the first question, the left has shown the capacity to become a majority viewpoint. Even at the 1966 TUC and Labour Party conferences there were defeats of the platform on work sharing; majority votes against the U.S. war in Vietnam; and, also, at the Labour Party conference the following resolution:

> "This conference recognises that unless there is a substantial reduction in military expenditure, the Labour Government's ability to achieve the national economic recovery, social progress and prosperity to which it is pledged will be impeded by recurrent balance of payment crises. Conference calls upon the government to contract its role in Western Germany and make a decisive reduction in military commitments east of Suez . . . making possible a defence budget of well below £1,750 million."

I am not mentioning here those policies on which the left were defeated but on which they polled very substantial votes which pointed to possible victories.

The policy victories were important but limited. The main policies of the Government were endorsed; yet to see only this is to miss the change which, however slowly, is in fact coming about and heralds a major shift. It is that the Trade Unions which once were the unquestioning, reliable and mass supporters of right-wing policy are *beginning* to cease to be reliable. Ralph Miliband in his *Parliamentary Socialism* records this as a labour movement historian when he writes:

> "But never in the history of the Labour Party has there been serious disagreement with the unions on its fundamental aims and purposes. This is why the Party leaders, protected by the crushing power which the Constitution of the Party attributes to the Unions, were always safe from the challenge of the Left. It is the withdrawal of that protection after 1959 which has created a problem of unprecedented magnitude for the Party leadership." (Merlin Press, p. 346.)

The significance of this has also been pointed out by successive Communist Party Congresses. It creates the conditions for the minority becoming the majority in so far as it truly fights for and represents the interests of the majority.

But a shift of policy in the mass organisations so that for instance the left progressive policy is adopted by the main trade union bodies, is not something accomplished only or mainly in the framework of these organisations. It is a question of political and industrial struggle at the place of work, on the site and in the office; in the localities; among the young people, etc. For this kind of mass development to succeed the divisions on the left must be overcome and nothing is more vital than the pretence that the Communist Party does not exist or is not part of the movement. In an intriguing article in the *New Statesman* of October 21st, the writer, Alexander Cockburn speaks of "The Last Taboo". It cannot be a good thing, he writes:

> "That a permanent, organised section of the socialist movement in this country—sometimes presented as an organisation in whose tentacles industry writhes almost powerless, sometimes as a little sect too minuscule for fleeting attention—should, when it is not being ignored, be only the object of childish abuse."

In our 29th Congress resolution we also dealt very plainly with narrow and sectarian notions which hold back the relationships of the Party with other sections of the movement.

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Ending Right-Wing Domination

This basic shift in the position of the Trade Unions, which is itself linked with other changes taking place in the country, contributes to answering the second question: can the right-wing grip on the machine be beaten? No one will forget that when Gaitskell was defeated over unilateral nuclear disarmament he said he would fight, fight and fight again; or that Wilson snapped back, when questioned about a defeat at the Labour Party Conference, that the Government's response would be "to govern". To win majority support for a shift in policy in no way guarantees control of the movement. But the *possibility* is there however bitter the fight.

At a moment like this, all those arguments and proposals which make the left and progressive forces draw back from challenging the right-wing control can only damage the advance of the movement. For instance, the proposal to cease paying the political levy, the argument that the Trade Unions are run by corrupt minorities which one must abandon to their fates; the idea that advance can come only by building up the shop stewards' organisations and turning one's back on the fight in the trade union machine—such ideas represent a retreat for the left progressive movement at a time when the possibilities for advancing are greater. They themselves will only create frustrations and illusions because they contribute nothing to the advance of the movement.

It is one thing to recognise that as this struggle becomes more intense, the right wing will itself seek to lop off all left elements and split the movement. To split may be their approach; it is not ours. John Gollan puts the matter concisely in his *Socialism in the Sixties*:

> "Of course there is always the possibility, as the political struggle sharpens up, that the right wing in the movement may try to expel the left from the Labour Party. Everyone must try to present this as an essential aspect of the struggle to change the balance of power in the labour movement. If at any moment this right-wing effort should temporarily succeed, the left forces should consider the best tactics in the actual situation which then prevails.
>
> "It is not a simple question of right wing, left wing and Communist Party; but of the class nature of the labour movement based on the trade unions and their political association with the Labour Party. Whatever the form of development, we do not want to break the trade unions away from their association with the political labour movement.
>
> "The real challenge and the real alternative is for the left forces to work with the conscious aim of changing the balance of power in the labour movement and breaking the entrenched power of the right. To end right-wing domination, no less—this is the real challenge." (p. 72 but see also the whole of Chapter 4.)

The end of right-wing domination, however, is not the result of a single act. It is bound to be a process with many transitional stages and with phases of defeat and advance which are impossible to predict. And this is equally true of the battle to shift the policy of the Labour Government and, in the course of it, to bring about changes in the leadership of the movement.

This is a prospect of moving forward from the present position.

I have touched on the fact that there has been a growth in the left forces. There are an exceptional number of left MPs; powerful forces in the Trade Union movement; the growth of rank-and-file activity, as for instance among the engineers and building workers.

The Communist Party and its Role

But these left and militant forces are not a single homogenious body but a coalition or alliance. How is this alliance itself to develop? A new alignment of political forces cannot come spontaneously from within the trade unions, or the shop stewards, or the Labour Party as now organised. Because this is no new question it was to meet this that the Communist Party was founded after the first world war. If the problems that face the Communist Party are great they are also a measure of the illusions which still beset the movement including a large part of its left wing. The slick attempts to write off the smallness of the Communist Party as due to slavish adherence to Moscow only sidesteps a problem for the movement as a whole.

Without an independent political party, not subject to right-wing discipline, publicly active, publishing a daily paper and other journals and material, based on Marxism, dedicated to socialism, continuously concerned to work out the most advantageous strategy for the advance of the working-class movement—without such a Party the position of the left would be hopeless. And unless this Party grows in size and influence, a fundamental advance of the left is impossible. This is no arbitrary statement but borne out by the history and record of the Party. It is a lesson to be learned not only by large sections of the left but even by many members of our own Party. It is worth expanding this a bit.

First of all, the Labour Party is not *this* kind of political party and does not play the role described. If it were, this entire discussion would be redundant.

Secondly, the Labour left is not in general based on Marxists. There are among them some who describe themselves as Marxists; more of them simply as non-Marxist socialists (I have just met a Calvinist who believes in predestination and believes communism is inevitable!). And in the

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broader left movement, many who do not think of themselves as socialists at all.

Operating within the framework of the Labour Party and its discipline, with the separation of the Parliamentary Labour Party from the Labour Party as such, the left is formed around different groups often dependent on a particular individual. Sections of it remain anti-communist and so maintain the most serious division of all among the left. Some of the leading forces tend to exaggerate Parliamentary action and underestimate the importance of the mass movement. Some tend to wait for the movement so as to reflect it rather than help to create it.

In both the 1964 and 1966 elections the leading left elements within the Labour Party faded away at the whiff of victory. Admittedly, this is not likely to happen so easily again just because of present experience.

And thirdly, neither the Trade Unions nor the most militant of shop stewards' committees can themselves perform the function of a political party of socialism.

Put it another way. The growth of left forces within the Labour Party, within the trade unions, in the factories, sites and offices *depends* on the existence, activity and growth of a strong Communist Party.

For that reason also, if the Communist Party is to become a mass political force, reaching out into the main, decisive sections of the people, it must with whatever difficulties imposed by the present set-up, build up its electoral basis and win Communist councillors and Members of Parliament.

In studying, therefore, the prospects for the movement, it includes as an indispensable part of it, the building of the Party and of the Young Communist League. The Political Resolution of our 29th Congress, which deserves more study than it has received, summed up the four vital things needed:

> "(a) agreement on a popular political programme; (b) far-reaching changes of a left-progressive character in the trade unions; (c) the development of friendly relations between Communists and Socialists and all progressive movements, and between Communist Party and Labour Party branches; (d) a growth in the membership of the Communist Party, and its political campaigning and electoral work, including a sufficient number of candidates for the Party to be seen as an electoral force."

There is no need for Communists to pull their punches in exposing and criticising the actions and outlook of right-wing social democracy. In fact it must be done boldly and plainly. But the whole point of our criticism is to create the widest mass struggle against the Government's policy and for an alternative. That criticism therefore must be part (and can only be effective as part) of the growing left unity.

Changes in the Printing Industry

George Woolley

ABOUT 350,000 trade unionists in the printing trade are employed by about 4,000 firms organised in the employers' organisations in the United Kingdom. There are probably another 100,000 workers either not organised or in electrical, engineering or clerical unions bringing the total to something around half a million.

Taking into account the existence of non-federated firms it appears that each plant has on average a hundred workers.

This industry is spread over the whole country, each town having its local general printers and many their own local newspaper presses.

A Word of History

For hundreds of years the basic method of printing hardly changed, most of it, certainly the utilitarian part, was done by hand assembly of pieces of type and printing from them.

From the late 15th to the late 19th century this was the method. At the end of the 19th century typesetting was largely mechanised and the camera entered the trade to help in reproducing by relief methods photographs taken in the ordinary course.

An industry started by Caxton in the 1470s had to wait until the mid-1800s before human muscles

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were supplanted by any stronger force in the printing presses. Steam power was then applied. It was soon supplanted by the electric motor. Then became possible the production of mass circulation newspapers, and printing and publishing started to be big business. That is, profits became the prime motive of business and the dissemination of news and propaganda ancillary considerations.

It soon became apparent that an industry free from foreign competition and using rapidly developing means of communication—first the railway, then telegraph, telephone, radio, plane and motor vehicle—could quickly be monopolised.

Towards Monopoly

The way to monopoly was via the war for mass circulations. As a newspaper's circulation rose it attracted more advertising which increased its profits.

Starting with Lord Northcliffe at the turn of the century, when he founded the *Daily Mail*, the circulation war was ruthlessly conducted and national newspapers began to consume each other. Every trick of the trade was used—sensationalism in reporting, flashy presentation, garish typography, sex, free gifts, commercial advertising in various trade journals setting forth the nature of a paper's readership to attract advertisers, financial approaches and takeovers through share purchases—nothing was overlooked.

As a result over fifty national daily, Sunday and London evening papers disappeared in as many years. A few powerful families—the Harmsworths and the Aitkens (Beaverbrook) predominating—owned the national press with few exceptions by the time the Second World War broke out.

The drive for mass circulation to attract advertisements put the advertisers in a powerful position. In order to keep a mass readership a paper kept its sale price below the cost of production and recouped from advertising revenue. This incidently helped to maintain the press monopolies, as it meant that a new paper could not start right away with millions of readers but would have to be run at a loss for some time before a circulation sufficient to attract enough advertisers was achieved. Hence the statement that a couple of million pounds are needed for a new daily national paper. Since the War one or two attempts have been made, but have either been still-born as in the case of the new Labour paper which was to have seen the light of day in 1966, or have lasted a very short time as was the case with the *Recorder*—a right-wing Tory paper—a few years ago.

The *Sunday Telegraph* is the only really new paper to be published nationally since the war and to last more than a year, and it is based on the well-established *Daily Telegraph*, just as the *Sun* (replacing the *Daily Herald*) is part of Cecil King's empire. And the future of neither of these journals is all that secure.

For some years, since before the Second World War in fact, the lordly proprietors of the national press have been buying up provincial papers too. Local papers have tended more and more to merge into groups printed in main towns with certain pages devoted to local affairs.

Over most of the British Isles the press—national, regional and local; morning, evening and Sunday—is largely owned and controlled by a few powerful groups.

Competition is confined to these few groups and is a fierce one for circulation, with its concommitant advertising revenue. The stakes are high and casualties heavy.

In 1961 the acquisition of the *News Chronicle* (itself a result of a former merger) by the Rothermere *Daily Mail* empire caused a scandal. The result, typically, was a Royal Commission.

Equally typically this Commission made no proposals to break the monopolistic trends, but it *did* put the blame for press closures on to the workers, alleging that 37½ per cent of national paper staffs were surplus to production needs.

The Communist Party and the *Daily Worker* submitted evidence and propositions to the Commission calling for laws to be enacted, unscrambling some of the press monopolies, limiting a person's financial interests to only one newspaper and controlling advertisement space. Propositions for the setting up of municipally-owned presses, for nationalising the paper-making and ink and machine-making industries were also made. The encouragement of bodies like trade unions and co-operatives to be newspaper proprietors was urged. But the Commission ignored all that.

In the Periodical Field

The moves against the workers were quickly followed up. A joint board (with an "independent" chairman) between union representatives and the owners had been sitting on questions of use of manpower in newspapers with the technical aid of *The Economist* Intelligence Unit in certain newspaper offices. This "intelligence unit" is incidentally operating in every department including those where no press commission strictures applied.

While the monopolists continue to dig in in the newspaper side of the industry, some considerable changes have occurred in the general and periodical sections.

Well before the War the newspaper proprietors entered the periodical field. It can be readily under-

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stood that mass circulation magazines can be attractive to advertisers in the same way as the daily press. The Harmsworth family, with its successful experience in national and provincial papers and based on its mass circulation (for those times) of periodicals like *Answers* and *Tit-Bits* had developed the Amalgamated Press octopus—taking in big plants like the Cornwall Press, Richard Clay, with their hundreds of publications, and even absorbing Kelly's Directories.

But since the Second World War the pace to monopoly in this field has accelerated to a remarkable degree. There is a change in the nature of the more recent amalgamations. The post-war mergers have meant many more closings down of production units and the development of big modern factories in the provinces capable of exploiting the latest techniques in printing. The London trade has suffered most in this development, the central area is littered with dusty, empty buildings formerly busy printing houses for in some cases for well over a century. There is no doubt that some closures were speeded up by the fact of the extraordinary land values in central London.

So far as publications are concerned there have been many casualties in the drive to build mass circulation magazines. It is in the field of periodicals that the most marked advance in modern techniques of printing is evident. Before the War the photogravure process began to be used in the production of colour in periodicals. A certain "muddiness" in reproduction, particularly of the text was evident. But with development of inks, paper and machines, improvements have taken place. The most rapid change has been the application of the lithographic offset printing process to fast-running presses using reels of paper in the manner of the huge newspaper letterpress machines.

New Techniques

This process has made possible the production of full-colour magazines and has now invaded the weekly newspaper field. It has a by-product of effecting very considerable savings of time and material in the type setting and assembly into pages in the composing room. The general application to newspaper production is imminent; in fact one national paper, admittedly small in circulation and confined mainly to the sale among, and interests of, the licensed victuallers—the *Morning Advertiser*—is being produced this way.

Typesetting, especially for newspapers and periodicals, had hitherto been achieved by the rapid casting from molten metal of lines of type (or single letters) and their arrangement in page form by skilled compositors preparatory to the casting of stereotype plates from which the printing is actually done on high-speed rotary presses.

But the refined photogravure and developed lithographic offset process encourage the initial setting of type to give way to reproducing the type characters to make up pages not of type metal but of paper prints from negatives, adding rules by drawing lines on the prints, sticking artists' work in the appropriate spaces all on a sheet of frosted glass lit from underneath, preparatory to transferring the whole to the printing cylinder. In some cases the pages are "made up" by arranging the negatives of areas of type and illustrations. The elimination of metal type means the disappearance of certain jobs —in fact it is possible that printing from any relief surface—type, line and half-tone blocks—is relatively soon to become obsolescent.

No more stereotypers, electrotypers and line-and half-tone block makers will be needed. In fact the managing director of the *Daily Mirror* only about a year ago told Leeds Printing School students that quite soon stereotypers would no longer be required.

And the typesetting on to film itself is subject to many changes, most of which can be applied meanwhile to the metal process, too. A technique of using computers in typesetting is well advanced and in use in the United States.

As is usual, new methods stimulate invention in the older established systems, so there is some speeding up in letterpress printing and in half-tone block-making. Again, especially in block-making for illustration, new techniques eliminate skills hitherto thought indispensable. Nor is this all. By the use of telegraphic apparatus type is set on several linotype machines simultaneously at various places, making possible the production of a newspaper so far as the general text or news is concerned in a number of places at once, leaving only local news to be done in the particular region where the paper is sold.

The development of new materials for use by the established methods is taking place, too. Very durable and prehensile plastic and rubber-based "plates" have been developed that can be acid-etched or cast and are now used in place of stereotype and electrotype plates.

Nearly all these new techniques are developments of methods that are quite old. But there is being developed in the U.S. a process called electrostatic printing. This is a system in which a film of a page of type or an illustration or design is "projected" electrically after the manner of a film or slide projector, on to a sensitised paper or by using a light-sensitive pigment and the "image" is fixed chemically or by heat, using neither ink nor a printing machine as we understand it. It is being used currently in the U.S. to produce maps from microfilm, but its application to book production is imminently possible.

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I have mentioned the impetus towards mass circulation of papers and magazines. Book production is affected in a similar direction by the new methods. The paper-back—cheap and nowadays relatively durable—has made possible far wider reading, which has a positive feature as the publication by these methods of a number of classic and popular scientific works indicates. Photo-typesetting and offset printing is sufficiently refined to be used in ordinary hard-backed books and is increasingly so being used.

All these things have a two-fold direction to be economically viable—mass circulations and saving of time. From the employer's standpoint they have other tremendous advantages: considerably enhanced productivity and the elimination of many skills, which solves problems so far as the scarcity of skilled labour is concerned.

One post-war development that has made a difference to the small jobbing printer is the application of lithography to form and various types of stationery printing and to internal memoranda, reports, specification and minutes, work in large enterprises or local authorities—a sort of do-it-yourself work that the smaller offset machines can do very effectively even for special small-circulation periodicals. The work is infinitely better than duplicating and approaches the best letterpress in appearance.

Printing and Profit

Over the past 20 or 30 years there has been a relatively slight increase in the labour force, but even the most casual observation will make it clear that much more work is actually being done. From eight to twelve pages soon after the War daily newspapers produce 16-20 or more, while the Sunday press has not only gone up to an average of about 36 pages but adds to each a magazine supplement in full colour as well, and the local papers really are fat.

In October 1959 *The Times* published over two issues a survey of the printing industry in which the point was made that the average output per worker rose between 1948 and 1954 by 80 per cent, earnings by 43 per cent, meaning an overall reduction in costs of 20 per cent.

It is no wonder that in April 1963 the *Investors' Chronicle* said "Paper and print shares have been looking brighter" and the profits published then and since bear this out. According to the *Financial Times* 24 newspaper and printing companies made £23 million profit for the year ending May 1963. This figure had crept up to £30½ million for the year ending in May 1966 for 22 companies. One newspaper and periodical giant—Cecil King's International Printing Corporation—made £15 million last year, while in 1964 the British Printing Corporation (a combine including big firms like Hazell-Sun —itself a fairly recent merger between Hazell, Watson and Viney and Sun Printers—Purnells and Waterlows, to say nothing of dozens of others including World's Press News Publishing Co. which produces the weekly comment on the doings of those in the newspaper business) made practically £5 million.

According to the British Federation of Master Printers' Economic Report for 1965, wages and salaries averaged £883 (£17 per week), net output was £2,270 per employee, leaving £1,387 to meet overheads (not cost of materials) and leave what must be a handsome profit.

An amount equal to about 64 per cent of each worker's wage is surplus value to the employer. That is exploitation of considerable proportions.

This seems to contradict the contention that 400 firms in membership with the B.F.M.P. have suffered a reduction in return on capital by 1½ per cent and profit in relation to sales by 1.3 per cent between 1961 and 1965. That is what the employers told the Prices and Incomes Board when that body was investigating the 1965 wage agreement. It is certainly strange that the Report accepts such contentions and it is even stranger (or is it?) that the Prices and Incomes Board can state that "output per man hour has risen only slowly, earnings have risen rapidly, profits have fallen(!) and prices have risen" in face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

But, of course, in the drive for profit truth is usually a first casualty.

Thus we find the industry rapidly concentrating, with sections functioning as monopolies or near monopolies, with technical changes that can and do pose some very serious problems to the workers.

Printing Trade Unions

The workers in this trade are generally well organised and in the main centres, especially London, organised workers form probably the highest percentage of any industry, with the possible exception of passenger transport. In many centres the closed shop has been in being for years and it is the justifiable pride of printing trade unionists that they secured payment for holidays as far back as 1918 and the printing industry was the first sizeable one to secure the 40-hour week.

Printworkers were organised in unions as far back as the 1820s or earlier. Their organisation was based on the crafts of compositor, pressman, and bookbinder. As the slow process of mechanisation and invention took place other skilled sections organised—the stereotypers, the engravers, etc. Towards the end of the 19th century, the assistants

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in the machine rooms, the labourers and semi-skilled workers built up their unions.

By the first decade of the 20th century, the pattern established was three unions for compositors and letterpress machine-minders—one in London, one in Scotland, one in the English provinces and Ireland—with a separate union for machine-minders in London—a union for proof-readers in London, several small unions for music-engravers, map makers, monotype casters in London; litho printers were nationally organised, so too were the stereo and electrotypers. The makers of half-tone and line blocks for illustration were organised in the Society of Lithographic Artists, Designers and Etchers and the general workers and the machine-feeders and assistants in the National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants.

The bookbinders and machine rulers (account book column ruling) with a history going back to the end of the 18th century, were organised nationally with the exception of the London machine rulers. The small printing men were organised nationally. The National Union of Printing and Paper Workers covered the workers, male and female, in the paper warehouses and in the collating and folding trades. Papermakers, first organised in 1800, were in two unions.

Amalgamation

After the First World War the small printing machine operatives, the bookbinders and warehousemen amalgamated into the National Union of Printing, Bookbinding and Paper Workers.

By the end of the Second World War there were 13 unions in the trade. These were all affiliated to the Printing and Kindred Trades Federation which was organised nationally and regionally.

Relationships between the various unions were generally good, but there were some opportunistic policies pursued—and there was certainly not a little craft prejudice.

The opportunism was evidenced by semi-skilled workers taking over parts of a skilled man's work at lower rates, the craft prejudice not allowing the upgrading of semi-skilled workers at any price. Women to this day in the binderies are, like their engineering sisters, ridiculously underpaid and are not allowed to work at all in most sections of the trade.

But the impact of monopoly tendencies, the demarcation problems arising from new techniques, and the general unwisdom of disunity has brought a crop of union amalgamations in recent years.

Unions confined to London—the compositors, machine-minders, readers—have amalgamated with the provincial Typographical Association to form, with the Press Telegraphists, the National Graphical Association. There is still a separate union catering for most of these workers in Scotland.

But the most significant development is the recent amalgamation between the National Union of Printing, Bookbinding and Paper Workers with the National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants. The former covered many skilled sections and some semi-skilled and unskilled, while the latter cover mainly semi-skilled and unskilled and included, particularly in the main centres, the clerical workers in the trade. Both unions included some thousands of women in their ranks. The new union, by far the largest in the trade, is called the Society of Graphical and Allied Trades.

The aim of one union for the industry is now in sight.

Forms of Union Struggle

This closing of the unions' ranks in face of increasing concentration of the employers is not only timely in view of problems such as demarcation, redundancies in one section, scarcity of labour in another, retraining, new apprenticeship schemes, etc., but really underlines the recognition that even in the sphere of wage claims—the most jealously guarded of any union's prerogative—a combined approach has been seen as the best. For the past 20 years wage claims have been increasingly made by groups of unions led by officers of the Printing and Kindred Trades Federation.

The trade unions are part of the army of the working class, their weapons are various forms of collective action, from a general strike to a local canteen boycott. The method of campaigning is by negotiation first and action afterwards. The officers are the trade union officials from general secretary down to shop committee man. The general staff is—or should be—the General Council of the T.U.C.

This army fights for objectives of direct and immediate benefit to itself but its victories—and defeats—react on the situation of millions outside its ranks.

The craft unions in the printing industry protected themselves from unemployment and sickness by mutual financial support. The tactic was to limit membership, control entry by negotiating ratios of apprentices to journeymen, and later to induce retirement by superannuation benefit in order to relieve the pressure of large numbers of unemployed on the jobs available. This system reached a high point with the London compositors when, in the mid-1920s, a superannuation scheme was inaugurated which paid £2 per week to retiring members after 35 years at the trade. This was equivalent to about 45 per cent of the minimum rate. Unemployment benefit paid by the London Society of Compositors raised the meagre State benefit to a little more than the superannuation benefits.

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Of course, the members in work had to bear the cost, and, especially during slumps such as in the early 1930s, that was heavy and sometimes so heavy that benefits had to be reduced a little. These schemes did work in so far as workers fully employed suffered no reductions in wage rates all through the hungry thirties—a considerable achievement.

The unions catering for unskilled and semi-skilled workers—generally much later organised—adapted the craft unions' restricted entry and closed shop tactics to their own situation. The closed shop was operated where possible with the unions strictly controlling the supply of labour to the various jobs.

This has reached the point where—according to rule—in several unions no member can voluntarily leave a job or apply for a new one without the authority of his branch committee.

Originally, this protected the workers in the better-paid places, but it has increasingly had the tendency to set a premium on lower-paid ones and is a serious restriction on a worker's right to leave a job he does not like. Increasingly, this control of labour supply and deployment has resulted in officials' time being spent on labour exchange work.

The employer's right to discharge is not impaired for reasons of discipline or loss of work but there is technically some protection against victimisation.

Problems of Organisation

The piecemeal growth of the workers' organisations over hundreds of years has resulted in diverse forms. Craft unions were originally based on the members in each firm. These were the "chapels" and the workers' representative the "father" of the chapel. With such a basis hallowed by tradition the problems discussed and resolved were primarily of an industrial character. In the provinces, in the various unions, branches based on the town developed alongside the chapels, but this pattern was not always repeated in London, especially as there were until recently unions based solely on London.

The "chapels" did not normally need to meet frequently, being confined, as has been pointed out above, generally to domestic matters, so with union head offices easily reached for paying in subscriptions weekly they usually met—and still do—once a quarter. Union affairs were conducted by quarterly delegate meetings, with executive committees meeting weekly or fortnightly in the evenings.

This pattern was—and still is—reflected in the set-up in London, so far as the nationally-based unions are concerned, though possibly to keep in line with the provincial town-based branches to conform to the unions' rules, they are called branches. The London-based sections of some unions have up to 30,000 members and their meetings are on a delegate basis from the chapels and meet in some cases only three times a year.

It must be stated that formally, the London chapels can affiliate to local Labour Parties and trades councils, though in practice they usually do not since the workers concerned rarely live in the district where the factory—therefore the chapel—is situated.

As local politics and trades council business were often not discussed due to the foregoing factors in the chapels and delegate meetings, this has encouraged a divorce of political matters from industrial ones in the unions' organisation. In most of them political sections were set up confined to political levy-paying members. These met on a London-wide basis to decide on resolutions and elect delegates to national and London Labour Party conferences—and to disperse some of the political levy among individual members standing as local or national government candidates. Only one London union—the London Society of Compositors—had local area organisations which could affiliate to the local Labour movement bodies, and these local organisations were originally set up to help in organising local non-union shops and were voluntary, unofficial committees with no income apart from expenses and affiliation fees which had to be applied for.

London, especially at present, is not the whole trade but it is the biggest centre and the development of the unions there has left its mark in varying degrees in the provinces.

It will readily be seen that the development of the unions as weapons of class struggle and the development of cadres is not encouraged in such an atmosphere. Three of the half dozen or so MPs from the printing union ranks were officials when elected—Bowerman (London Compositors, a Lib-Lab), Naylor (London Compositors), Isaacs (Natsopa).

The T.U.C. General Council has long had a printing trade representative though only Robert Willis (London Compositors, now National Graphical Association) has achieved any great prominence, chairing the Congress a few years ago and finally landing up as a member of Aubrey Jones's Prices and Incomes Board.

State of Flux

The trade is currently in a situation of considerable flux—revolutionary technical changes, new union structures, new concentrations of capital, more and more mergers and shut-downs.

Certain forms of printing have declined—there are fewer posters displayed on hoardings for

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example—but in general much more printing is being done, by no more people.

Some illuminating statistics were published in the *Ministry of Labour Gazette* for February 1966. Despite the establishment of a 40-hour week in the general and periodical sections and 37½ hours for London evenings and national Sundays, with 35 hours for national dailies, the average hours worked for men during October was 46½ in paper-making, printing and publishing. Youths in the trade average 42¾, only women (which includes part-timers) and girls work near the 40 hours with 39½ and 40¼, respectively.

Yet the great cry from the employers is "We must reduce the labour force" and this is echoed by some union leaders.

Under a justified plea to end casualisation on some London newspapers a large number of jobs have disappeared completely. Instead of 75,000 casual shifts a year in one department alone being turned into a proportionate number of regular jobs they have just vanished.

Says Granville Eastwood in the *Financial Times* of July 25th, 1966:

> "In three papers alone the savings on manpower have reduced (in one department only) the men . . . on average-sized papers from 700 to 350, 800 to 550 and 935 to 800. *These figures show what can be done by unions and management at factory level.*" (My italics—G.W.)

Such facts and figures show who loses out—the workers—and the *Financial Times* on June 13th, 1966 showed who gains—£4 million extra profit made by only 22 companies in the trade. They paid in dividends over £9¼ million.

What sort of policies could be operated by the stronger, more united unions to advance the interests of their members, which is their prime job, and how can they make a significant contribution to the advance to socialism?

It is certainly no part of a union's business to approve in any way increased exploitation of its members. Nor is it a union's business to encourage in the slightest a reduction of the labour force in a highly profitable trade. That will soon spell unemployment and immediately spells increased profits to the employer.

Technological changes will have a serious effect enough. It is not easy for workers after years of a certain type of work to have to retrain for something else. This retraining must be at skilled rates of wages.

There is no doubt that while certain craft skills will disappear, so too will a number of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs. The present occupants of these must not be thrown on the scrap heap but given the opportunity to train for more responsible work.

It is more than overdue for a stop to be put on excessive overtime and undue rest-day working being used to get a living wage in this industry.

But the section of the trade most exploited are the 110,000 women. Their gross earnings (even allowing for their working fewer hours) are half that of men and in the newspaper and periodical sides their hourly rates are less than half the men's.

Issues to be Faced

Technical changes will permit—even encourage—the use of women in departments hitherto closed to them. The choice of the unions will be either to bring them in on the same rates as men or face their being used as cheap labour to undermine men's rates. It can be argued that provided women are not allowed in certain jobs they will not be a threat. But that applies to union shops only and there are still far too many non-union firms in the trade; and in periods of unemployment it is difficult to maintain such bans anyway.

The immediate raising of women's wages in the jobs they are in is a long-overdue reform. The acceptance of girls for training in all jobs they can do and at the same rates as men, can ensure the protection of the wages and conditions of both sexes.

The employing class ever since the end of the war has bemoaned what it has called "overfull" employment and has urged policies to create unemployment, dilating, in journals such as *The Economist*, on "desirable" percentages of unemployed. While the monopolists have been generally unsuccessful it does not mean that they have given up trying and recent governmental actions to create unemployment have encouraged the employers. World-wide falling off of trade is becoming apparent, too, so it behoves the trade unions to be more than a little wary.

Within the limits set by their nature, the unions can do much to rebut the employers' tactics in their offensive. When the employers cannot get their way by direct confrontation they try to draw the unions into all sorts of joint boards and committees—and, it must be realised with some success as the loss of jobs referred to above in London papers indicates.

Taking Stock

It is time for the printing unions to take stock—to see what is the best way ahead, what sort of policies will be in the best interests of the members and will carry them in any struggles to achieve them.

Five main bases would seem to satisfy these provisos: increased wages commensurate with increased responsibilities and skills and with the already enhanced productivity, let alone the potential arising from technical changes (it is also a fact

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that compared with pre-war purchasing power the wage rates of many sections of the trade have actually fallen—certainly the skilled rates are not in most cases four to four-and-a-half times as much as before the war, which they would need to be to maintain pre-war purchasing power); retraining and redeployment at the expense of the employers and open to all (men and women) workers in the unions, with recruitment and transfers controlled by the unions, and, of course, no one to be sacked; an immediate reduction in hours and curtailment of excessive overtime; an industrial transferable non-contributory pension scheme; increased holidays.

On the longer-term and moving into the political field, the important questions of weakening the monopolist grip on the press and laying the basis for the people's organisations to be able to publish newspapers and other organs of opinion reflecting their aspirations and desires need to be considered. The Communist Party's proposals to the Royal Commission on the press give a lead on this.

To carry the members of a union in a policy means to involve them. This can be done best by the widest democracy. Here there is certainly room for development in the printing trade. The authoritative base of a union is the branch at which every member can attend and which has the constitutional right to elect delegates to higher, regional and national policy conferences and directly to elect all officers and committees. Branches should meet frequently enough to discuss any issue in time and be able to affiliate to local trades councils, etc. This would mean a minimum of a monthly meeting. The base of a branch would have to be determined by experience and circumstances. In some cases it would be residential, others formed of members in a given production area like Fleet Street in London.

Just as in other trades, there should be the maintenance and development of shop organisation, turning the existing federated house chapels into authoritative factory shop stewards' organisations with a place in the union's structure.

With a development of larger united democratic unions pursuing progressive policies the possibility of a wide acceptance of an alternative policy leading to a socialist society becomes stronger. The experiences in struggle for the policies suggested, the democratic discussions and actions on the political issues in the branches and conferences will broaden the printers' outlook and enable them to add new triumphs to their pioneering of holidays with pay, the 40-hour week and the founding of the old *Daily Herald*.

Perhaps one of the healthiest signs is the fight-back against the Government's policy of wage freeze. S.O.G.A.T. not only spoke and voted at the recent Trades Union Congress against wage freezing and steps to enforce it but followed up by determined action to ensure the payment of a cost-of-living bonus due in September under the existing agreements.

The Society of Lithographic Artists, Designers and Process Engravers took the same line. When the Government gave notice of its intention to compel the cessation of the payment of this two-shilling bonus the National Graphical Association protested sharply. That Union's executive might have noticed the volume of correspondence in its journal over the past few months overwhelmingly objecting to the wage freeze and the threats to enforce it.

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The Problem of Social Formations in Chinese History

G. Lewin

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ARISING from the discussion of the "Asiatic Mode of Production", the whole problem of social formations has again aroused the greatest interest and attention amongst Marxist scholars on an international scale. Although Stalin's formulation concerning the five successive modes of production appeared to have remained sacrosanct until far into the 'fifties, things changed as a result of the revival of discussion around the "Asiatic Mode of Production" which, it appears, the resolutions of the Leningrad Conference in 1931 brought to a halt only temporarily.

Shortly before his death, Eugene Varga, the well-known Soviet economist, wrote the following about the significance of the concept of the Asiatic mode of production: "It is clear that Marx ascribed a historical importance to the Asiatic mode of production corresponding to that of later modes of production." (*Ocerki po problemi politekonomii Kapitalisma*, Moscow 1964, p. 358.) Marxists would do well to ascribe the same kind of importance to the later modes of production which arose out of the Asiatic mode of production.

One can recognise two trends amongst the participants in the present discussion. One trend proceeds *a priori* from Marx's definitions and regards its task as consisting in embodying the new knowledge acquired during the last 100 years into the *schema* outlined by the classical founders of Marxism. The other trend, while completely accepting the correctness of the principles underlying the Marxist teaching and scientific method, regards it as more valid to apply Marxism creatively to the study of the historical process and, at the present stage above all, to place in the forefront the assimilation and evaluation of new material.

Both sides recognise that the increasing importance of the national liberation movement and of the new young national states on the international plane poses important problems for Marxists, the solution of which can have decisive influence on the course of world development. In this connection, the study of pre-capitalist formations becomes a task of the greatest political actuality and assists in laying the basis for a theory—yet to be worked out—of the national liberation movement and of the national democratic revolution.

Role of the Production Forces

The founders of Marxism have left us a mass of references to phenomena connected with types of pre-capitalist formations, which are of immense value to us from the standpoint of method. All start from theoretical propositions, amongst them, for example, that which deals with the role of the productive forces in the further development of human society. Ernst Hoffmann outlines and summarises this aspect of Marxism most concisely in his contribution ("Social Economic Formations and Historical Science"—*Marxism Today*, September 1965, pp. 270-276). Nevertheless, one cannot wholly agree with his conclusions in so far as they relate to the succession of modes of production.

As Marx says, a higher form permits conclusions to be drawn from the preceding stage of development from which it has arisen, but he nevertheless warned against frivolous and schematic conclusions when he wrote:

> "While it may be said, therefore, that the categories of bourgeois economy contain what is true of all other forms of society, this should be accepted only *cum grano salis* [with a grain of salt]. They can contain them in a developed or crippled or caricatured form, but always in their essential difference." (Marx, *Critique of Political Economy*, Berlin, 1951, p. 264.)

Marx's remarks about the categories of bourgeois political economy apply naturally to any kind of schematic application of the categories of political economy. It is necessary to study the concrete circumstances before arriving at conclusions.

One cannot agree with the reasons advanced by Ernst Hoffmann for his criticism of Eric Hobsbawm's interpretation of the well-known quotation from the Introduction to the *Critique of Political Economy*. In this Marx designates the Asiatic, the ancient, the feudal and the bourgeois modes of production as "*epochs in the progress* of the economic formations of society". (*Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, p. 11, my emphasis, *G.L.*) He then continues: "The bourgeois relations of production are

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the last antagonistic form of the social process of production. . . ." More than a battle over words is involved here if from it there arises the idea that Marx here is equating "progressive" with "successive". It is obvious that certain phenomena can be related to one another in a qualitatively different way without it following that the higher, more developed phenomenon arises directly out of the lower one which preceded it, or that the lower one must inevitably advance to the higher one.

In biology it is generally accepted that not every evolutionary line must develop unconditionally to the highest stage—to man. We do not, however, conclude from this proposition either that Darwin's law of the origin of species is false or that all existing species must develop into man some day.

"Progressive" in this case is not therefore synonymous with "successive". Why then should it be different in the case of social evolution? Why should we presume that all types of social-economic evolution will reach the same, the most highly developed formation, with their own forces? Is it not an important tenet of Marxism that the capitalist mode of production is *the first* one to extend all over the world and to create a world market? Does not this signify a qualitative leap which differentiates it from preceding modes of production? What Hoffmann has to say about Mediterranean and European cultures in general may sound attractive at first sight (ibid., p. 273). I am no specialist in this field and gladly leave the task of undertaking fundamental research into this complex question to others more qualified than I am. But as a sinologue, I cannot accept this view as far as Chinese development is concerned.

Chinese Development

In the course of my researches I have come to the view that many features of the "Asiatic Mode of Production" as outlined by Marx in his *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations* apply to Chinese development in the period from the Shang era (about 1600-1100 B.C.) to the end of the Zhan-Guo era (about 400 B.C.). True this view presupposes that one does not incorrectly identify "Asiatic Mode of Production" with "irrigation society" as is still done very frequently. The need to establish large, artificial irrigation systems did not arise in China in this period, nor, indeed, are any other kind of great building undertakings to be noted until just before the end of the period I have mentioned. The "Great Wall" only began to be built in the last centuries before the unification of the country at the end of the 3rd century B.C. and large irrigation systems date only from this period. Notwithstanding all this, it is not possible to cite Marx for the view that irrigation or great communal building undertakings are the pre-conditions for the rise of the Asiatic mode of production. For Marx states explicitly:

> "The communal conditions for real appropriation through labour, such as irrigation systems (very important among the Asian peoples), means of communications etc., will then appear as the work of the higher unity—the despotic government which is poised above the lesser communities" (*Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, pp. 70-71).

This means that it is not the necessity for establishing irrigation systems which conditions the rise of the Asiatic mode of production, but on the contrary, it is the existence of the Asiatic mode of production which makes possible the installation of irrigation systems "in honour of the higher unity".

To me it seems not improbable that the necessity for a state organisation before the division of society into antagonistic classes, which is characteristic of the Asiatic mode of production, arose in China out of the great cultural contrast (Gefälle) existing between the heartland of China and the neighbouring peoples of the North-West. This contrast constituted a perpetual stimulus to raids for booty and for conquest on the part of their nomadic neighbours, against which the Chinese village communities could only protect themselves by means of a strict military organisation. To be sure, more fundamental research is required before this hypothesis can be confirmed and it is not impossible that it will be disproved some day. But what can be regarded as certain is that the transition to class society can be said to have been concluded with the reforms of Chang Yang in the 4th century B.C. even though, as will be understood, special features of the previous period of development left their mark on the one that followed.

It likewise appears to be proven that although there were numerous slaves in China there was never a slave-owning society. The overwhelming majority of the direct producers consisted of more or less free peasants, from the time of the dissolution of the Asiatic mode of production, while the slaves were employed not in production but as household slaves or for pleasure or ostentation. Complaints by peasants about "the lazy, idle slaves" they had to feed, have come down to us—a state of affairs hardly conceivable in the slave-holding states of antiquity.

This is the point where attempts to declare the successive social formations outlined by Stalin as valid for all cultures in the world, break down. This should not be taken as a denial of the fact that the human race has, by and large, always gone forward and not backwards—apart from cases of special catastrophes. In contrast to the examples of the Germans given by Hoffmann, who, he said, were able to leap the stage of slave society because they were able to build on the basis of the more advanced culture of Rome, China offers no such development.

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We have no knowledge of any "break in continuity" in Chinese history such as that which is typical of Europe in the transition from slave society to feudalism. In China, the transition from the "Asiatic Mode of Production" to the next higher stage, was organic and there are no indications of any decisive influence from any external, higher modes of production. This does not mean that China was immune to external influences—Dr. J. Needham's outstanding book, *Science and Civilisation in China* proves the contrary, most definitely—but only that this influence could never be as decisive for social development to anything like the extent that Hoffmann found in the examples he quoted. Nevertheless, Chinese development took place, on the whole, in relative isolation from the social influence of other cultures until European capitalism began to penetrate China in the 19th century.

Was China "Feudal"?

The social formation which existed in China from the 4th century B.C. until modern times is frequently described as "feudal". This is not the place to discuss whether the periodisation I have given is absolutely sound and generally acceptable. What is incontestable is that a break is observable in the 4th century B.C. which no longer permits any identification of the previously existing social order with the one which followed it. For this reason I prefer to describe the latter, provisionally, as "pre-capitalist".

Hoffmann describes the essence of feudalism as follows:

> "Feudal relations of production are based upon the *private* large landed property of individual feudal lords, most of it divided into numerous small allotments in *private* usufruct and possession of individual peasants. In ancient Egypt and India or in Aztec Mexico, relations of production were founded on the *state* landed property of the priestly, military and administrative aristocracy . . . (i.e., essentially corresponding to Marx's category of the Asiatic mode of production)." (op. cit., p. 271.)

He then continues:

> "The results of a procedure by which this and other different types of mode of production are subsumed under the category of feudalism cannot be accepted as evidence against the existence of fundamental laws of the feudal formations."

A little later on he admits that the researches of Marx and Engels were restricted largely to the "genesis and development of the capitalist mode of production".

From this the following can be said to emerge—at the very least, and without arriving at more far-reaching conclusions—namely that the studies undertaken by the founders of Marxism were concentrated in the first place on *Feudalism in Western and Central Europe*, and even here, only to the extent that they were important for their analysis of the capitalist mode of production. Thus, if—for good reasons—the founders of Marxism made no comprehensive analysis of the feudal social formation in Western and Central Europe, then we have even less reason for looking to them for a definitive analysis of pre-capitalist modes of production in areas outside Europe.

Notwithstanding the great importance of Marx's comments on the Asiatic mode of production and the other forms of transition from primitive to class society—and the same applies to the ideas outlined by Engels in *Anti-Dühring* and *Origin of the Family*, they cannot be compared with the depth of Marxist analysis of capitalist society. And the fact that Marx never thought of placing oriental development after the dissolution of the Asiatic mode of production side by side with that of the European, under the same umbrella, is proved by the numerous references he makes to Indian and Chinese conditions during the last century.

There is therefore no need to call in the authority of the founders of Marxism for the attempt to force Chinese development into the framework of "a feudal society" of the West European type. There is likewise no possibility of doing so, as far as the facts warrant it.

Since the social formation initiated by the reforms of Chang Yang differs fundamentally from Western and Central European feudalism—whose features Hoffmann summarises in the quotation given above—it is quite unfounded to describe it as "feudal". Until more fundamental research has been done, it would be better to speak of it as a "pre-capitalist" social formation. And this term is not used to signify that a capitalist formation developed out of it later on—this, as is well-known, is not the case—but because it belongs to a qualitatively lower stage of development. Perhaps a more apt description will emerge from further research, especially if it should turn out that similar social formations have also existed in other countries.

Technical Development in China

Study of pre-capitalist society in China confirms the importance of the need to examine the development of the productive forces and to note the role they play in the social process. Needham has drawn attention—rightly—to the fact that in the period between the 7th and 14th centuries, China was in many respects far in advance of the Arab and European countries in technical development. The productive forces, accordingly, should have come into conflict with the relations of production very early on and have led to a more advanced mode of production. Hoffmann draws attention to the fact

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that when we are discussing the history of the productive forces we are dealing with an extraordinarily complicated and complex process which Marx and Engels, on the basis of the factual knowledge available at their time, were unable to clarify as far as pre-capitalist formations are concerned. Hoffmann then explains how the transition from Greek tribal society to slave society was accomplished on the basis of the level of development of the productive forces which had been achieved in the oriental class societies of the Near East. As he points out, the Germans similarly were able to make the direct transition from primitive society to feudalism by means of the iron tools and water mills introduced by Roman culture. What is interesting about this is that Hoffmann emphasises how the internal contradictions of the societies he mentions, arising from the lack of conformity between the productive forces and relations of production, could not be resolved by a higher social development *within* these societies. According to Hoffmann's presentation, the contradictions in oriental class society were resolved through the medium of Greek slave society, those of the Roman slave society in the feudal society of the Germans.

It is quite obvious from all this that European feudal society is the *first* class society which is able to overcome its internal contradictions within its own framework, if one disregards the Asiatic mode of production in China which, in any case, can be regarded as a transitional phenomenon on the road from primitive society to fully developed class society.

In the case of Chinese development there was no society outside China which could establish a higher mode of production there on the basis of the level of the productive forces achieved by the Chinese. What happened then in this specific case? Clearly the further development of the productive forces by themselves did not suffice for the achievement of a higher development of society. Certain additional factors are involved here which, in the examples cited by Hoffmann, lie *outside* the social systems concerned. This signifies that neither the oriental nor the ancient mode of production mentioned by him contained within themselves the driving forces of a more advanced social formation able to bring about the overthrow of the old system. Although the slaves of antiquity organised revolts, they were not in the position, had they been victorious, to appear as representatives of a higher social formation able to utilise the productive forces which had developed in the interim in any significant way and achieve a higher level of productivity.

It was the same in China. No people in the world can look back on such a revolutionary tradition as the Chinese in their pre-capitalist epoch. But nonethe-less, each peasant uprising, whether successful or not, was followed by a continuation of the old relations of production. There was no class in China which, like the bourgeoisie in European feudalism, was able to break the chains of the old mode of production.

It is clear that to achieve this, the development of the productive forces alone—which manifested itself in China in the operation of great enterprises with large numbers of employees, in a most wonderful production technique in the textile, porcelain and other industries, in a high technical development of the art of printing, of navigation, etc.—is not sufficient.

As far as this side of things was concerned all the pre-requisites existed in China for an advance to a higher social stage. What then were the obstacles? One must obviously differentiate between capitalist and pre-capitalist (in Europe—feudal) manufacture. Marx says with regard to this, "However, the modern mode of production, in its first period, the manufacturing period, developed only in places, where the conditions for it had been previously developed during medieval times. Compare for instance, Holland, with Portugal" (*Capital*, Vol. 3, Lawrence & Wishart edition, p. 327).

Merchant Capital

The pre-condition for the rise of *capitalist* manufacture is the penetration of merchant capital into the sphere of production. But while there were certainly merchants in China, the scope of their activity was rather limited. The greater part of the products were removed from the sphere of commercial activity because they were produced either for personal consumption, or as payments in kind to the State, or manufactured in the State monopoly undertakings. Only a very small part of all goods produced found their way into the market. This resulted in severe limits being set to the accumulation of capital by the merchants. In addition, there were no such features as the sudden inflow of capital from overseas colonies, the dispossession of the churches, as happened in Western Europe in the period of rising capitalism. The centralised Chinese State system, likewise, offered small opportunities for the attainment of such positions of power as the Fuggers and Welsers were able to acquire in the Holy Roman Empire and the German Nation. No Chinese Emperor was ever forced to apply to his subjects for loans and to part with some of his privileges in return. Whatever a Chinese Emperor needed he was able to get by the use of his despotic power. Since the Palace and the gigantic apparatus of bureaucracy were above all parasitic, capital was not accumulated in their hands to any significant extent. It is characteristic that the merchants put

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their profits into buying land and hardly ever invested them in means of production. A further additional factor is this: China never experienced the feudal fragmentation so typical of the feudal Middle Ages in Europe. While the medieval towns in Central Europe were able to win a large number of privileges by the skilful playing off of King and feudal lords against one another and by the exploitation of the contradictions between them, the Chinese cities had always to deal directly with the State authority against which they were far too weak to win any notable political concessions. A League of Free Cities such as the German Hanseatic League was simply inconceivable in China.

On the other hand, there was scarcely ever a time during this period in China when wage workers who were doubly free did not exist; there was a comparatively highly developed money economy, and serfdom and bondage were practically unknown.

On what grounds could we describe the social form in China as feudal? What has it in common with the feudal society in Europe described by Marx? Agriculture, to be sure, played the decisive role in production at this time. But the conditions of the immediate producers were not comparable. The Chinese tenant farmer or peasant, working for himself on his little plot of land, was not subject to the same impositions at the hands of the feudal lord or landowner as the European serf or bondsman. In China, socage (statutory labour) was only performed for the State, and in theory every owner of land was liable to be called upon to perform this kind of labour service. No feudal lord or big landowner was master over the lives and persons of his peasants. The right of jurisdiction was centred in the Emperor and his officials and could not be acquired along with a fief. In so far as the Emperor dispensed fiefs, this only meant that those who acquired them were able to obtain the income from various estates—but were able neither to dispose of it freely nor did its possession imply any rights additional to the appropriation of surplus labour, which otherwise had accrued to the Emperor. It is true that for a time there were also certain features and developments which modified these relationships, especially after the entry of the Europeans into China. But it must be emphasised as a general principle that there is very little similarity between the social system which existed in Europe during feudal times and that in China between 400 B.C. and the 19th century.

It is incontestable that some definite social advance took place in China during the period I have mentioned, but the developing contradictions between the productive forces and relations of production could never have led to a higher social formation by means of a qualitative leap. The repeated upheavals caused by the internal contradictions and manifesting themselves in great uprisings, the overthrow of dynasties or the incursions of foreign nations could not resolve the social contradictions. Under these circumstances, the discussions which have been going on for a long time in China about the germ of capitalism, seem to be quite pointless. Just as little as we can regard the commodity production, manufacture and money economy of ancient Rome as germs of capitalism, can we regard them as such in Chinese pre-capitalist society.

The Genesis of Capitalism

A whole complex of factors is involved in the genesis of capitalism, some of which can also be present in pre-capitalist society. One should only speak of the genesis of capitalism where the whole complex can be proved to exist. It is clear that the capitalist mode of production only developed organically out of feudalism in Western and Central Europe. And a new quality was achieved in so far as capitalism was able to extend itself all over the world —the first social order to do so.

Nevertheless, it was not the aim of the capitalists to introduce into their colonies and dependent territories a capitalism which would compete with them, or to develop the existing formation there to the stage of capitalism. The penetration of capitalism had quite the opposite effect and restricted the advance of the dependent countries, since its role in these countries was purely parasitical. On the other hand—and this is part of the contradictions of capitalism in general—its penetration of these countries, including China, lead to the rise of a proletariat, and, in a small scale, of an indigenous bourgeoisie. And this is the beginning of a world-wide development which was bound to lead finally to the rise of the Socialist system and the dissolution of the system of colonialism. Marx's prognosis that capitalism constitutes the last form of class society has now been validated by the course of events, although only a third of the world has as yet made the transition to Socialism.

Clearly Chinese development is not the only one which does not fit into the framework of slavery-feudalism which Hoffmann regards as universal. Marxist scholars in many countries have published material indicating that even in the cases of Germany and the countries of Eastern Europe—not to speak of countries outside Europe—there are features which are very hard to harmonise with the conceptions which have prevailed hitherto about slave society and feudal society.

It is clearly conceivable that in formulating generally valid basic laws for these social formations, one can abstract from a whole number of differences in a far-reaching fashion. But to try to forcibly

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impose such a conformity on such widely diverging social forms as Western European feudalism and Chinese pre-capitalist society seems to me to be neither necessary nor possible. Obviously, what results the research being contributed at present in all parts of the world will lead to, cannot possibly be anticipated.

The historical necessity for the transition to Socialism arises definitively out of the Marxian analysis of the capitalist mode of production, to which there also belongs the tendency to the world-wide extension of capitalist activity. Just as capitalism cannot be limited to a single country or, for that matter, to a certain group of countries, so, of necessity, must the social formation which succeeds it, Socialism, also embrace the entire world. This incontrovertible truth is not affected by the fact that we renounce Stalin's too narrow definition of definite successive social formations in which the Asiatic mode of production does not even figure at all.

By engaging in more detailed study of pre-capitalist formations and acquiring new knowledge, we will facilitate the transition from a pre-capitalist social order to Socialism for millions of people and will contribute to the elaboration of laws of non-capitalist development.

In contrast to the apologists of the social order based on exploitation, which is nearing the end, we do not need to fear the truth. New knowledge can only add to and consolidate Marxism, and because it is true, new facts can never lead to its refutation or distortion. It is for these reasons that Marxist scholars have every interest in the most rapid and harmonious development of the study of pre-capitalist social formations, and the international discussion now in progress will, in the spirit of international collaboration, soon contribute to the working out of new important discoveries.

Discussion Contributions on:

Marxism and Criticism

Alfred Corum

The Function of the Critic

WHAT is the function of the critic? Surely it is simplification and explanation, in the light of the critic's assumed wide experience and knowledge of the particular field he is discussing, by analysis and paraphrase, comparison and analogy, in the most concise and simple language he is capable of, to make plain what to others is obscure in the work of art. If this is not so, there is no place for criticism, for, ideally, the work of art should speak for itself. The real problem then is, why this gap between artist and public which the critic is required to fill.

It arises because of the unequal development, culturally and educationally, of different people, both as individuals and as classes. The question is immediately posed: is art to be the preserve of a privileged class or should it be made available to all? Nowhere do I find that Michael Long deals with this question except in passing in his introduction. He assumes, what is the standpoint of most bourgeois critics, that art is available to all and that all have equal powers of appreciation and assessment. The position of such critics is comparable to that of the philosophers of whom Marx said that hitherto philosophy (read art) had been concerned to explain (read depict) the world: the point is to change it.

The artists are certainly changing the world in sum total and it is surely the job of critics to discover in which direction it is being changed and to take sides. My experience of much bourgeois criticism is that most are incapable or afraid of giving a clear indication; they are too concerned with the *cognoscenti*.

I have always advocated the greatest co-operation between us as Marxists and those scientists, critics, social scientists, etc., who are conducting research independently of us and yet reaching conclusions which in many respects approximate to ours. It is merely an indication that a certain problem, when tackled, will prove to have only one solution. I have always thought it foolish that we should initiate a piece of research which has already been done by others who perhaps have greater resources than we have. But if we are to accept the three-quarters and one-quarter argument and further agree that the one-quarter is "that most important of all the quarters where the new creative ideas enter", should we not, while incorporating this one-quarter into the whole, be concerned with

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convincing the non-Marxist of the truth and validity of our own three-quarters? Though we may have only three-quarters of the truth, we have more to give them than they us. Will they accept it? Their own quarter will be sterile unless grafted on to a Marxist foundation, in fact, any truth embodied in their own quarter can be negatived by wrong thinking in the remainder of their theorising.

Michael Long tells us that there is a group of critics who are heavily committed to the break-up of one kind of culture and the re-establishment of another and that they imply and uphold a whole way of life. As always in a class society we have to ask, For whom and in whose interest? Is Jonathan Miller, for example, to be included in this group? The cultural life which he appears to campaign for has no impact whatever on the mass of factory workers and shop assistants. Are these people to be ignored in a discussion of the nation's cultural life?

The Reactionary Artist

I find it inconceivable that the various reactionary views listed as pertaining to Pound, Eliot and Yeats can have had no effect on their artistic products. It implies a complete separation between their personal lives and their poetry and makes the creative process even more mysterious. As concerns that process the analogy of dreams may help. In the dream, happenings and images occur in the most fantastic way and with most illogical relations. It would seem that control and direction are absent and that the "computer" is running wild. Yet on analysis afterwards, preferably by self-analysis by free association, it can be found that much in the dream (and therefore presumably all if we could pursue our analysis in sufficient depth) can be connected with happenings and impressions, with what one has read, the previous day or even in times past. The dream is not something which is visited on us; it is self-generated and has material connections.

In the day-dream, which I take to be the state in which works of fiction and poetry is conceived, we are half-way to the fully conscious state and a certain measure of direction and control is evident. I do not concern myself as to who or what is doing the controlling; I am simply describing a phenomenon as it exists.

In the fully-conscious state, which, broadly speaking, I take to be the state in which most scientific work and forward planning is done, we are aware, or think we are, that we are fully in control of our faculties. Of course, these are not three clear-cut states but merge into each other.

As a materialist then, I cannot understand how Eliot's political and social views can fail to influence his poetry. Concerned as he was with language, his day-dream state could not fail to produce new and strange combinations of words as well as new ways of looking at the world but it would be quite impossible for him to express sentiments, or even to create the atmosphere, of real human and universal brotherhood such as is inherent in the conception of communism as well as of undogmatic Christianity. So what he has done is to produce beautiful forms, not an inconsiderable achievement, but he has not provided a spur to action. It is no defence to say that that was not his intention; as far as we are concerned this must rank him lower than possibly lesser poets such as William Morris.

Music

Michael Long draws his examples almost entirely from the novel and from poetry, with a side-glance at painting. The creative process in musical composition seems at first glance to be less amenable to a materialist explanation than are other forms of art. But I believe that a study of this process in depth would throw much light on human psychology as well as an artistic production generally. It seems to start with a germ idea, whether melodic, harmonic or rhythmic, which can come, probably as the result of outside stimulus, to anyone, but which can only arise in a European as a consequence of his being the heir of centuries of musical development which has been preserved as a social heritage. It is inconceivable that an Australian aborigine could spontaneously produce the melody of a Schubert song. This is the materialist link—a social one. But once secured, the theme seems to have its own law of development as the basis of a larger work, and this is where the workings of the human mind become so fascinating because, while working in the day-dream state, a very large measure of control and direction is called for simultaneously.

The problem of the accessibility of much contemporary music is bound up with its attempt to break with social tradition. Many young composers really do believe that " 'To do what one likes' in matters of cultural expression, is an inviolable right." If one believes that the freest competition in a free-for-all will result in the good surviving and the dross being discarded, one will support such a right. But this is an anarchist conception, not a communist one.

In music more than anything the work must speak for itself and be its own justification and we have in modern music, electronic, aleatoric, pointillist, perhaps the furthest advance in depersonalisation, where even the performer is becoming redundant, of any of the arts, with the result that it is becoming more and more alienated from people generally. Composers who "write for the future" are writing for nobody. Would Michael Long agree that "these 'bourgeois decadents' might be the central guide of

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what we want". The majority of practising musicians, not to speak of the listening public, would not support him. They are making a strenuous attempt to "let the apple exist in its own separate entity".

Art and People

Which brings me back to Cézanne's apple. We are told that "Cézanne's great effort was to shove the apple away from him and let it live of itself". To me this phrase sums up a lot of the futility of modern music and art. (And I am not depreciating Cézanne's apple as a work of art, merely the criticism of it.) This effort to de-personalise, which is the critic's comment, not Cézanne's, will of course appeal to people who have this as an ideal. But to the average viewer the picture is an idealisation of his reaction to all apples. The apple, or the picture, cannot isolate itself. The dialectic is not between the picture and abstract space, it is between the apple as a picture and some person who beholds it. And the relationship will vary with the individual, it is not a thing in itself.

Art is produced by people for people and artists who think that the less a work of art has to do with people the better, are dooming themselves to frustration. The vain attempt to divorce it from people will have the effect of preventing people from appreciating it. Is this what any artist desires?

A walk through the British Museum, with its thousands of artifacts from all over the world, many of which are utilitarian as well, should convince that art has always existed in association with people. To us most of the exhibits are solely "works of art". In their day and location they conveyed all sorts of meanings and emotions to the people who knew and used them. None of them were attempts to let them exist "in its own separate entity", which I take to mean independently of people.

I conclude therefore, that broadly speaking, the Communist Parties all over the world have not only a right but a duty in seeking to guide artists (it is impossible to coerce them) in the direction of making their work intelligible to their fellow men. Do not forget that in the socialist countries, and even here, there is a very extensive programme of art and general education open to anyone. In those countries where the Communist Party is the governing party, where errors and mistakes occur, as they will with all human institutions, the consequences can, of course, be more serious than in countries such as our own, where we are only a fringe. But in a fully democratic state such as a Communist one must be by definition, it should always be possible to rectify such errors. To elevate, as a principle, the artist to being his own censor (if he is a true artist he will be constantly practising self-criticism) is to court anarchy. The artist is only a craftsman at a higher level.

Bourgeois critics are fond of quoting the condemnation of Shostakovich's opera, *The Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, as an instance of communist coercion of the artist. But Shostakovich himself, after a year's reflection, came back with the Fifth Symphony, which he described as "a Soviet artist's response to just criticism". It was, and is, a triumph. This is how a communist artist reacts to criticism. In the West, where the cult of the individual really flourishes, such humility is not counted as a virtue.

Monopoly Capital

T. L. Drinkwater

RON BELLAMY'S review-article on "Monopoly Capital" (*Marxism Today*, November 1966) touches on a series of problems of economic analysis which are of vital importance in understanding State Monopoly Capitalism as it exists in Britain today, and, therefore, in finding our way forward to socialism.

I believe I am right in thinking that, apart from Ron Bellamy, two other members of the Communist Party's Economic Committee (Bill Mennell and Sam Aaronovitch) are currently preparing books which bear on these problems. This seems, then, a good time to put up for consideration a question which I find frankly most confusing.

Finance Capital

It may be put in this form: What precisely is "finance-capital", and what is the importance of this category in the analysis of State Monopoly Capital?

Bellamy quotes Lenin's concept (page 335), and chides Baran and Sweezy for insisting that the giant American corporation today "aims at and normally achieves financial independence through the internal generation of funds which remain at the disposal of the management". (p. 334.)

I note, however, that Sam Aaronovitch in his study "*The Ruling Class*" treats Imperial Chemical Industries, for example, as being in itself one of the

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"Main groupings of British Finance Capital". I am not at all suggesting that Aaronovitch shares the Baran-Sweezy thesis on self-financing, and of course he quite specifically rejects such views (page 44 ff.).

I have no quarrel at all with Bellamy and Aaronovitch when they attack the exaggerated conclusions drawn from a high degree of self-financing by manufacturing companies. But it is the case that the very large such concerns do have the capacity, over considerable periods at least, to accumulate from internal sources extremely large amounts of capital. I wonder whether Sam Aaronovitch would accept the argument that this is at least a major reason why certain such companies come to constitute, each in its own right, one of the main groupings of finance capital?

As I understand him, Bellamy would quarrel with this notion on the grounds that it ignores the tendency—to quote Lenin—towards "the merging or concrescence of banks with industry". But to me it does seem that what is at issue here is a *general tendency* for capital to be concentrated under the control of fewer and fewer and larger and larger companies and groupings in each sector of the economy considered separately, and at the same time for these larger "separate" capitals to become more and more closely linked with capitals in other sectors. In this connection the term "finance-capital" refers in particular to the linking up of "industrial" and "banking" capitals—"banking" here to be understood to mean, as Aaronovitch says "banking and cognate capital", i.e., banking plus insurance and other financial companies.

It is this process which I take it Aaronovitch is referring to when he writes that "The advent of finance capital has created an oligarchy within the capitalist class itself" (*The Ruling Class*, p. 75).

A Misleading Term?

It seems to me wrong to think of this process in a one-sided fashion, as meaning that in all circumstances the banks and other financial companies *must* hold the dominating position. To revert to Bellamy's critique of the Baran-Sweezy argument, I do not know the facts about U.S. capitalism, but I can see no reason, *a priori*, why it might not happen in a country that the balance of power, so to speak, might not swing at one time in favour of the banking parlours and the board-rooms of the insurance companies, and at another time in favour of the board-rooms of the industrial concerns. Just as I can see no *a priori* reason against Sam Aaronovitch listing among the main groupings of British finance capital, number 11 I.C.I., number 10 the Prudential, number 8 Cunard/Furness Withy/Martins/Royal Insurance. Nor do I think that it is part of Aaronovitch's argument that the groupings he identifies are necessarily permanent and unchanging.

In effect I am inclined to the view that the term "finance-capital" is in itself misleading, because it suggests too narrow an approach. To put matters very crudely, there is the suggestion in it that the money-bags in the banks and insurance companies must always be lording it over the industrial capitalists! It has repeatedly to be made clear that this is incorrect, and a vulgarisation of the concept.

If I am correct in holding that this term refers to the general tendency I have defined above, it remains still to assess the *particular* significance of the link-up between "industrial" and "banking and cognate" capital, but this point I must leave on one side.

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No Room for Homo sapiens?

J. D. Bernal

HAVING read Ivor Montagu's article in *Marxism Today* (June 1966) and listened to his address at Marx House on the same subject, I would like to put down a few reflections of my own.

In the first place, I am entirely with Montagu in his feeling that the subject of population has not received and does not receive the attention from Marxists that it deserves. That does not mean that I am entirely with him in the arguments he presents, but rather consider that he has reopened an important discussion which deserves to be followed up.

Short-Term Problem

There appears to be in the subject a confusion between long- and short-term considerations of population growth. I myself am to some extent to blame for this. I recognise that in my book *World Without War*, where I tried to deal with world economic problems, I was guilty of an un-marxist deviation, along Wellsian Utopian lines. I considered what *could* be done by the application of the scientific-technical revolution to the problems of the world as a whole, including those of the underdeveloped parts of it. I considered the resources and needs of the population, allowing for its very rapid recent growth, and showed that they were adequate for raising the level of production and consumption of the whole world to the highest level reached today in the most fortunate countries—in other words, what could be done—and I even included some of the factors, such as imperialism and war preparations, that prevented it from being done. What was not discussed, however, is what ought to have been—that is, I discussed what *could* be done, not what *would* be done. It is in this field that the real application of Marxism to Malthusianism arises. I did point out, however, that this was the crux of the problem—that if it paid to produce a world free from war and want, it would have been done long ago, and therefore surely, it does not pay to do so now.

This is the short-term Malthusian problem—how to provide within the next 30 years—by the end of this century—enough for the 6,000 million people who will be alive in the world at that time. This is a straight technical/economic problem, on which we already possess the essential data. As Montagu says, the developments of the twentieth century have caught up with the Marx-Malthus controversy. The world will starve, not because the population increases geometrically, but because the methods of production are being held back by capitalist-controlled economies, which cannot (and were not designed to) provide welfare for all. Capitalist firms exploit and will exploit the peoples of the poorer countries just as they have the poorer-paid workers in their own countries. That is the way the system works.

It is no use, as Montagu points out, saying it will be all right once the world has a Socialist economy, for there is not time to achieve that before the situation becomes desperate. It is very doubtful whether anything can be done at all in such a short time to prevent the increase in population, though it is not impossible that a new type of pill will be evolved of which one application will suffice to prevent birth for 20 years or more, and this might serve to limit the increase. We must, of course, do everything we can to hold up war preparations and imperialist exploitation in the next few years, but that will not be enough. We must show all the people in the world that the capitalist governments can only bring a general destruction of humanity, and that it is the people themselves who must demonstrate by their actions against capitalism and imperialism that they will not tolerate their rule any longer. The pressure of a total world resistance to capitalist methods might however be sufficient to check them and liberate more food in time for the greater population, a technically attainable aim, as working-class pressure has succeeded in doing in Britain, even short of a revolution.

Long Term

It is however, to the long-term aspects of Malthusianism that Montagu devotes most of his essay. Although it is not urgent, he feels that Marxism ought to provide for a state of the world which would enable mankind to flourish indefinitely in conditions which would be at least acceptable to the majority of men and women. This, he says, is more than a matter of food, it is one of room. Here I differ from him widely, and in fundamental principle.

He criticises the theses set down in an article by Tony Chater:

> "Of course there are sound reasons for advocating birth control—safeguarding women's health for example.
>
> "There is also a strong case for extending birth

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control to deal with the immediate problem of feeding the present world population.

"But in the long term there is no reason to believe that birth control will be forced upon us by limitations in the supply of food.

"Rather, when the immediate problem of hunger has been overcome, we should welcome a bigger population."

On the first three of these I am already in agreement, and so is Montagu. On the last one I differ widely from him. Montagu definitely does not welcome a bigger population, and fears that the usual Marxist view is apt to bracket us with the Catholics. He seems to think that the Biblical injunction "Increase and multiply" implies concern for the number of immortal souls and the greater glory of God. "Population limitation somehow diminishes his glory." Montagu maintains that Marxists should not take this view simply because "Marx and Engels showed that wealth is enlarged by the labour of human beings. *Ergo*, the more human beings you have the richer (and, by extensive assumption, happier) you will be".

Value of Large Population

My reasons for welcoming a large population are based on science, not on religion. It is because I appreciate the value of human beings in body and mind that I want to see as much as possible of the inorganic materials of the world turned into human beings. That they must be able to live active and satisfying lives, without enslaving women, goes without saying. Montagu feels there would not be room enough for them. Yet if we are considering the amount of available land per person at the present level of development of agriculture, this is an altogether inadequate argument. Only one-tenth of the world's land area is used for agriculture. The rest of it, the waste of mountain and forest, is nine-tenths of the whole, and most of it is what I would consider ideal holiday country, or could be made so with present available means of transport and shelter.

One of the great developments of the last decade has been the growth of the tourist movement, even in the Socialist countries, and it will grow still further and bring much happiness to millions, to whom automation will mean shorter hours of work and longer holidays. It seems, however, that with tourism people on the whole shun the lonely spots, and favour the Butlins and the Club Mediterranée (or Yalta for that matter). Montagu can keep his depopulated Orkneys for as far ahead as we can see.

Marx and Malthus

His biological argument is equally invalid. It is true that rats and grasshoppers in crowded circumstances develop unpleasant habits. We need to know much more about how this happens before we condemn human beings for getting together if they want to.

Human beings of the future will know how to deal with these problems when they meet them. It is certain that by having a lot of people the chances of producing a few of quite exceptional powers and skill, such as musical or mathematical skill, will be much increased. I do not agree with Montagu when he says "the bigger the community, the more difficult is democracy". The enemy of democracy is not the size of the population, but those people to whose interest it is to prevent the people from having any democracy at all.

Montagu supports his case with many quotations from Soviet authorities, for example:

> "Today we no longer disregard the works issued on population in the capitalist countries, since in them, too, we find a great deal of useful information, ideas and methods of tackling the problem. All this quickly revealed that reality is more complex than schematic conceptions, which, even if fundamentally correct, by their schematism caused no little harm in the years past." (Professor Pokrivshevsky, *Novy Mir*, No. 1, 1966.)

One can agree with Montagu on the need to re-examine demographic processes. But that does not mean the need to abandon Marx in favour of Malthus. It is possible to do justice to both at the same time. In any case, it is the short term problem of providing enough food for the people already born, or shortly to be born, that is the urgent one, and no quarrels about possible population in the 21st century can diminish its importance.

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Paul Carter

TONY CHATER'S contribution to the discussion on "No Room for Homo sapiens?" points out that industrialisation is the answer to the food crisis in the underdeveloped countries—the "third world". However he does not show how industrialisation of these countries will help and why it has not already occurred.

Blackett has pointed out[1] that the present day *per capita* income in the third world—approximately £40 p.a.—is one-tenth of that in the West. In real terms this is equivalent to what Europeans were receiving over 200 years ago, that is before the Industrial Revolution. Previous to the industrial revolution in Britain, approximately 5 per cent of our Gross National Product was being invested annually. The rest was consumed by the population. This low level of reinvestment amounted to only paying for the depreciation of existing stock—i.e., the maintenance of a static economy. The reinvestment in the third world today is on much the same level as it was in Britain then.

The Feedback Process

However in Britain, capital had accumulated from the trading and small scale capitalism of the merchant class, and from the manipulation of the Land Acts by the larger landowners. This was ploughed back into the economy at a rate of something like 15 per cent of the GNP, to create the material basis for the Industrial Revolution. Blackett and others have called this the "take off" period of economic development. This is the stage when accumulation of capital—either public or private—has reached such a stage that the reinvesting of this in the economy exceeds both the demands of the 5 per cent annual depreciation of stock, and the 2-3 per cent annual population increase. There is enough investment left over to produce self-regenerating economic growth and a dynamically expanding industrialisation can take place.

This has direct relevance to the food problem in the third world in that there is a feedback process from industrialisation to agriculture. Mechanisation, reclamation, artificial fertilisers, and strain improvements enable less agricultural workers to produce more food. If fewer workers are engaged in producing the nations food supply then more are available for industrial production, thus production as a whole, and consequentially living standards, goes up. Western countries have only 5-10 per cent of their population living on the land and the whole population enjoy a much higher living standard than the Asian countries where 90 per cent of the population live on the land.

The Soviet Union provides a good example of this feedback principle. Surplus capital produced by industrialisation is being reinvested in agriculture. A total of 71 billion roubles is being injected into agriculture between 1966 and 1970. This is as large an investment as in housing and construction. Total farm output is expected to be increased by 25 per cent in these 4 years and labour productivity is expected to rise by 35-40 per cent.[2] Since labour productivity will be increasing more than overall production, fewer workers will be needed to produce more food. The present proportion of people living on the land (50 per cent—two-thirds of these actually engaged in agriculture) is therefore expected to drop with a resultant increase in the number of industrial workers, and hence industrial production.

Investment in Third World

Heavy capital investment is obviously needed in the third world in order to boost their economies beyond the "take off" level, so that they can achieve a self-generating industrial economy. Capital feedback into agriculture can then help to produce the food necessary to banish the widespread starvation. Blackett reckons that £1 per head, or a total of £1,000 million annually, would be the barest minimum necessary for starting industrialisation. Powell[1] and others calculate that the amount needed would be upwards of £10,000 million annually for twenty years for the "take off" level to be reached. Certainly at least £4,000 million—the equivalent of a 10 per cent increase in the GNP for the 1,000 million population of the third world—is needed annually to start the process.

How is this surplus over the needs of already desperate nations going to be produced for this massive capital investment? The answer is that it is already being produced. There is a capital outflow from the third world to the West in the form of returns on investment, and from unfair trade prices, that is at least equal to the amount needed for industrialisation. As Idris Cox pointed out in the July *Marxism Today*—Britain gains more than £1,243 million annually from property and investment abroad. The USA gets £3,000 million per annum from its foreign investments. A substantial proportion of these returns are from the third world. On top of this downright robbery the third world lost £5,200 million between 1951 and 1961 due to the falling prices of the primary goods that they produce,

[1] *The Science of Science*, Pelican.

[2] *The Economist*, October 15th, 1966, p. 239.

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and the rising prices of manufactured goods from the West. The Geneva Conference on Trade and Development showed that the developing countries would be losing £2,800 million per annum by 1970 due to these GATT controlled price changes. The surplus capital necessary for industrialisation is being produced by the third world—but is immediately expropriated by Imperialism. In human terms their peoples are suffering the same privations, or worse, as did the British people during the first stages of our Industrial Revolution. But they are not getting any industrialisation to show for it.

Western "Aid"

The first political requirement then, for halting starvation in the third world, is to halt neo-colonialism and enable the capital produced there to be used there. The second requirement is to render honest aid to these countries so that their peoples need not suffer the birth pangs of industrialisation. Western aid does not fall into this category. Western aid is dropping, and carries high interest rates, 70 per cent of British aid now carries interest rates of up to 7 per cent.[3] A very great proportion of Western aid—at least half American aid—is for military purposes. Much of the rest is not used for the necessary industrialisation of the third world. Instead the economic infrastructure of the country is built up to ease the way for private capital investment from the West.

Perhaps worst of all, Western aid is given with strings, it is not given where it is needed most, so much as where it can shore up puppet states. For instance British aid runs at £16.73 per head in Swaziland, and £6.70 per head in Lesotho. By contrast independent India receives only 1s. per head, and Pakistan only 2s.[4] American aid has to be paid back in the currency of the receiving country, so that America now holds such a stock of rupees that India can be threatened with financial slaughter should she not toe the line.

Soviet Aid

By contrast Soviet Aid is carefully directed to helping the countries of the third world throw off neo-colonialism. Seventy per cent of all Russian aid goes on industrialisation, and tens of thousands of skilled workers and specialists have been trained either in the Soviet Union, or on industrial sites run on Soviet aid. Between 1956 and January 1965 the total Soviet economic and technical aid commitments amounted to nearly 4,000 million roubles—of which 3,500 million roubles have already been spent.[5] Approximately 500 million roubles has been in the form of free gifts, the rest as credit carrying only $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent interest—which only just pays for servicing the loans.[6] The loan is paid back after 12 years, during which time the investment will have more than paid for itself, so that repayment of loans in no way depletes the capital resources of the receiving country. Most important of all, Soviet loans are paid back in the form of goods, the primary goods naturally produced by these countries. No hunting around for foreign exchange is necessary, and the Soviet Union cannot build up reserves of the currency of other nations as a threat to their independence—as does America.

The Socialist countries are carrying out the two political prerequisites for the industrialisation and hence prosperity of the third world. They are fighting neo-colonialism, and rendering real aid. By contrast the West is exploiting these countries far more than it is giving aid, and its very aid is neo-colonialist in character. The British people must be made aware of British Imperialism's contribution to the crisis in the third world.

[3] Idris Cox, *Marxism Today*, July, 1966.

[4] *The Times*, November 2nd, 1966, p. 2.

[5] *The USSR and Developing Countries, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House*, 1966.

[6] Mr. Makarov, Attaché USSR Embassy, London. Speech at teach-in on "Crisis in the Third World", Birmingham University, October, 1966.

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